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ABSTRACT

Results from the third national writing assessment of 17-year-old students conducted in 1979 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are presented in this volume. Chapter one provides highlights of the results of the test assessment which indicate neither a major decline nor improvement in writing performance of 17-year-old students in general. Chapter two gives an overview of the NAEP assessments, a discussion of the populations assessed, a description of the written exercises, and descriptions of the methods of scoring: holistic, primary trait, analysis of rhetorical effectiveness, and analysis of syntax and mechanics. Chapter three provides an indepth discussion of the results, and chapter four gives an overview of the writing of 9-year-old, 13-year-old, and 17-year-old students. Chapter five offers some observations about writing in the United States and suggests implications of the results of the assessment for instruction. Appendixes include exercises, documentation, scoring guides, and sample papers; guidelines for syntax and mechanics analysis; group results and exercises evaluated for primary trait and cohesion; error frequencies for good and poor papers and selected groups; and the background questionnaire and group responses to background and attitude questions. (MKM)

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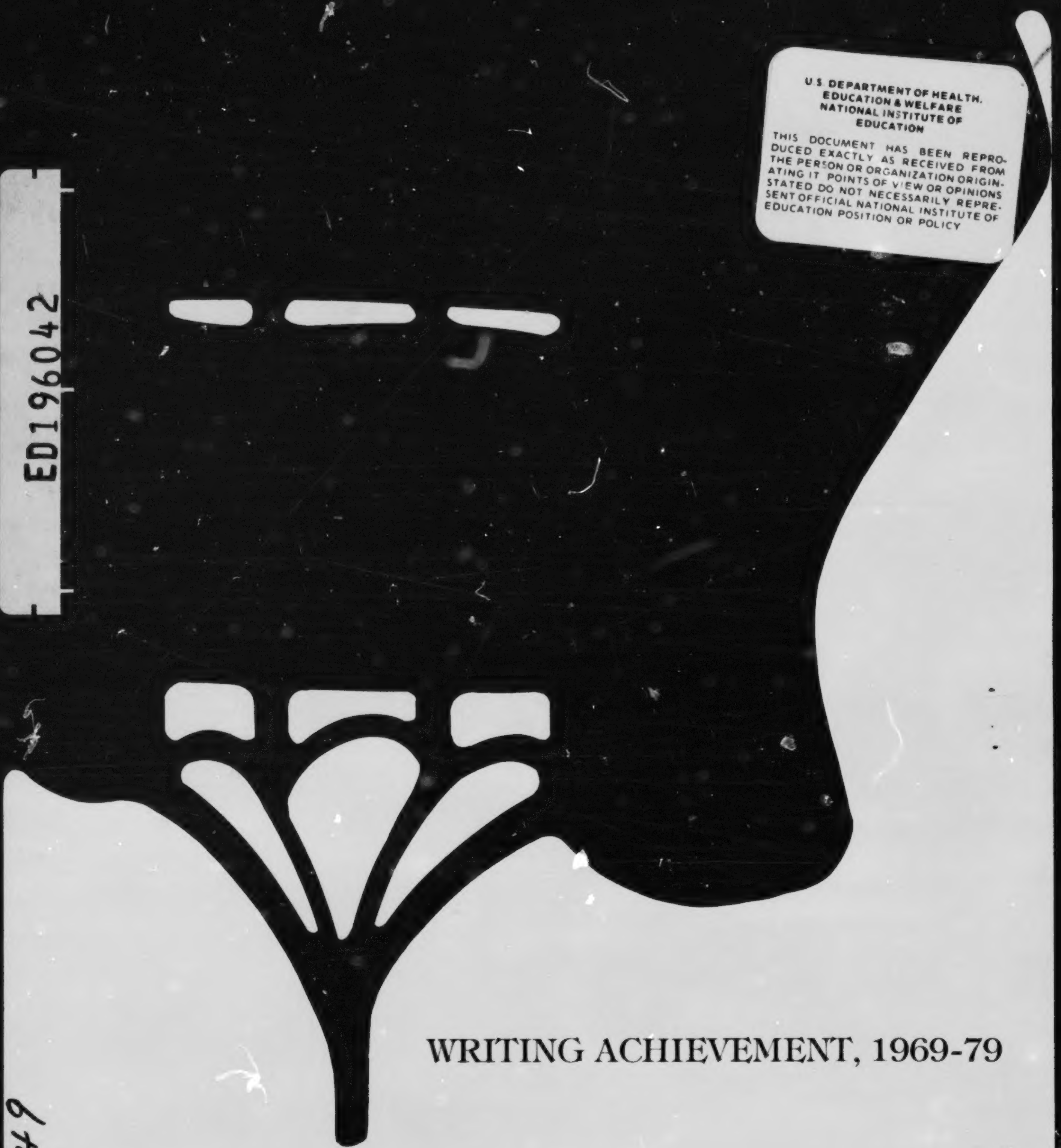

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT, 1969-79

Results From the Third National Writing Assessment

Volume I - 17-Year-Olds

CS206049

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS
Education Commission of the States

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Results From the Third National Writing Assessment

Volume I — 17-Year-Olds

Report No. 10-W-01

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FOREWORD

When the U.S. Office of Education was chartered in 1867, one charge to its commissioners was to determine the nation's progress in education. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was initiated a century later to address, in a systematic way, that charge.

Since 1969, the National Assessment has gathered information about levels of educational achievement across the country and reported its findings to the nation. It has surveyed the attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and sometimes adults in art, career and occupational development, citizenship, literature, mathematics, music, reading, science, social studies and writing. All areas have been periodically reassessed in order to detect any important changes. To date, National Assessment has interviewed and tested more than 900,000 young Americans.

Learning-area assessments evolve from a consensus process. Each assessment is the product of several years of work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the nation. Initially, these people design objectives for each subject area, proposing general goals they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. After careful reviews, these objectives are given to exercise (item) writers, whose task it is to create measurement instruments appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises have passed extensive reviews by subject-matter specialists, measurement experts and lay persons, they are administered to probability samples. The people who compose these samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can make generalizations about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, the National Assessment publishes reports and disseminates the results as widely as possible. Not all exercises are released for publication. Because NAEP will readminister some of the same exercises in the future to determine whether the performance level of Americans has increased, remained stable or decreased, it is essential that they not be released in order to preserve the integrity of the study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many organizations and individuals have made substantial contributions to the writing assessments. Not the least of those to be gratefully acknowledged are the administrators, teachers and students who cooperated so generously during the collection of the data.

Special acknowledgment must go to the many writing educators and specialists who provided their expertise in the development, review and selection of the assessment objectives and exercises. Particular thanks are given to Carl Klaus and Richard Lloyd-Jones, both of the University of Iowa, for providing leadership in the development of primary trait exercises and scoring guides; to John Mellon, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, for providing leadership in the development of the sentence combining exercises and mechanics and syntax scoring guides; to Charles Cooper, University of California at San Diego, for providing leadership in the development of the cohesion scoring guides; and to Paul Diehl, University of Iowa, for providing special assistance in all areas.

Administration of the writing assessment was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina. Scoring and processing were carried out by the Measurement Research Center (now Westinghouse DataScore Systems), Iowa City, Iowa. The scoring staff at Westinghouse DataScore Systems—in particular, Sue Worthen, Donna Benson and Dan Duse—deserve special mention for their excellent work supervising the primary trait, cohesion, mechanics and syntax scoring, as does Wendy Littlefair for her consulting work with the syntax and mechanics scoring. Edward White of the University of California at San Bernardino and his holistic scoring staff also deserve thanks for their work.

Within the National Assessment staff, special thanks must go to Ina Mullis, who has been coordinator of the last two assessments, the designer of the data analysis, the scoring monitor and a tireless reviewer of these reports. Jim Damon must be thanked for his data processing support; Jan Pearson and Ava Powell for their technical support; Marci Reser and Carmen Nietes for their production support. Generously assisted by all of the above, Rexford Brown wrote the report.

Roy H. Forbes
Director

CHAPTER 1

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESULTS

Changes in the writing of 17-year-olds were assessed with five writing exercises, one of which was evaluated holistically, one of which was evaluated for both cohesion and rhetorical effectiveness (primary trait evaluation) and three of which were evaluated for rhetorical effectiveness alone. In addition, two of the five essays were exhaustively analyzed in terms of syntax and mechanics, and students were asked a number of questions about their writing habits and attitudes. Exhibit 1-1 displays national changes for all of the writing tasks. Details of the assessments, of holistic, primary trait and cohesion scoring, and of syntax and mechanics analysis appear in Chapter 2 and in the appendixes. Further results appear in Chapters 3 and 4, and an interpretive discussion of the results appears in Chapter 5.

Some major findings:

- Holistic evaluation did not reveal a major decline or improvement in the writing performance of 17-year-olds between 1969 and 1979. However, it did suggest a slight decline in quality.

- Rhetorical skill (measured by primary trait evaluation) on a narrative task ("Stork") declined between 1969 and 1974, but rose considerably from 1974 to 1979. In 1979, three-fourths of the 17-year-olds wrote competent narratives.

- Rhetorical skill on a humorous narrative task assessed in 1974 and 1979 ("Grape Peeler") remained stable. Slightly more than one-third of the students wrote a minimally competent paper in both assessments, while fewer than a fifth clearly attempted to be humorous.

- Rhetorical skill on a persuasive writing task ("Rec Center") declined between 1974 and 1979. Proportions writing minimally acceptable papers dropped from 78% to 73%, and those writing successful papers declined from 21% to 15%.

- Rhetorical skill on an explanatory writing task ("Electric Blanket") remained stable between 1974 and 1979. In both assessments, about two-thirds of the students wrote papers that were at least marginally adequate, and about half wrote successful papers.

- A measure of cohesion in writing revealed that between the 1969 and 1979 assessments, the percentage of papers displaying good cohesion rose from 80% to 86%. Also, between 1974 and 1979, there was an increase in the percentage of coherent paragraphs in the descriptive essays.

- Females wrote significantly more successful papers than males in each assessment, with the exception of the humorous task. On that one, the males had an advantage in 1974, but lost it by 1979.

- Although significantly fewer blacks wrote adequate papers than the nation as a whole, the gap between their performance and that of the nation narrowed on all but one of the writing tasks.

- The disadvantaged-urban group, while still performing below national levels, improved with each assessment.

- Proportions of mechanical errors in the papers changed little over the decade. Punctuation problems, misspellings and awkward sentences continued to plague the majority of students, but there was no substantial increase or decline in these problems between 1969 and 1979.

- Writers seem to be divided into two camps: a majority who display a general grasp of written conventions and a minority of 10 to 25% who display massive problems with written language.

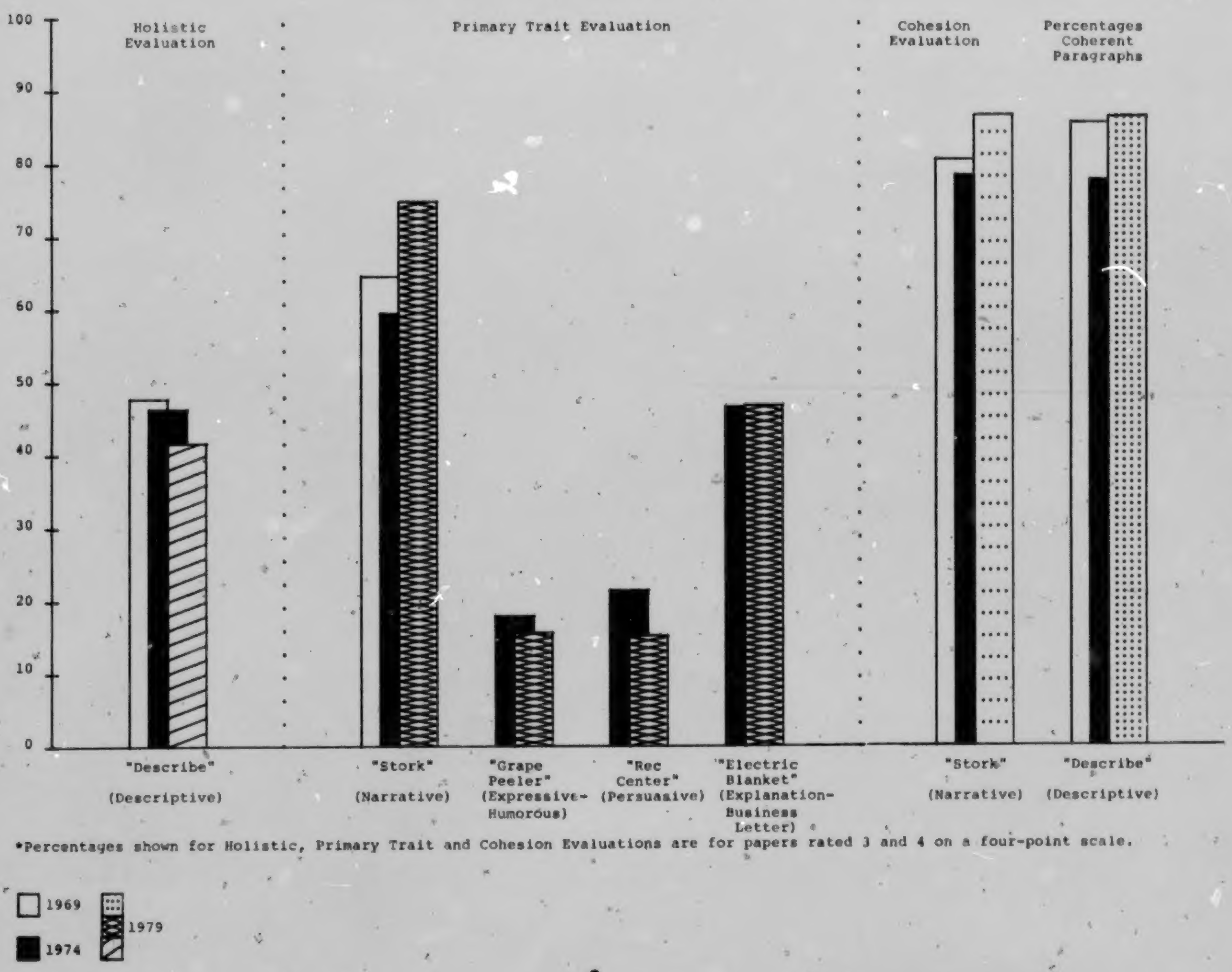
- Writers who performed well on the assessment appeared to have had more writing assignments in school. However, 57% of the 17-year-olds said that they had written three or fewer papers in the six weeks prior to the assessment.

- Few students reported having taken remedial writing classes—far fewer than these data suggest need intensive instruction.

- Slightly over half of the 17-year-olds said they sometimes enjoyed working on writing assignments. Twenty-one percent said they usually enjoyed it and 24% said they never enjoyed working on writing assignments.

- Very few students—7%—said they were routinely engaged in all of the following activities: prewriting, creating multiple drafts, receiving written and oral comments about their writing from their teachers, and working to improve their papers after they are returned.

EXHIBIT 1—1. National Percentages of Good* Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979



*Percentages shown for Holistic, Primary Trait and Cohesion Evaluations are for papers rated 3 and 4 on a four-point scale.

CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND

A. Overview

This report is based upon three national assessments of writing, the first in 1969-70, the second in 1973-74 and the third in 1978-79. Some writing tasks were included in all three assessments, permitting analysis of changes in student writing at three points during the 1969-79 decade. Other writing tasks were included in the last two assessments, permitting analysis of changes during the last half of the decade.

The results reported in this volume are not based upon the writing of the same 17-year-olds over the 10-year period. Rather, the results are based upon three different assessments. Seventeen-year-olds attending school were first assessed in the spring of 1969. Five years later, another national sample of 17-year-olds was assessed, and five years after that yet another sample was assessed. Since each sample represented the national population of in-school 17-year-olds, the assessments can reveal whether the writing skills of that age group are changing and in what respects. The assessment was not administered to intact classrooms; its nationally representative sample of 17-year-olds included students who were taking English classes and students who were in nonacademic classes, students from districts requiring four years of English and those from districts requiring only two or three years.

B. Populations Assessed

The target population for each of the three assessments consisted of 17-year-olds attending public or private schools.[1] Details of the sampling design and procedures are explained in NAEP Report 10-W-40, *Procedural Handbook: 1978-79 Writing Assessment* (1980) and numerous other Assessment reports and monographs. Here it should be sufficient to say that each assessment employed a stratified, multistage probability sample design. About 2,000-2,700 responses were collected for any given writing task. Some of the figures given in this report are based on an analysis of all 2,000-2,700 responses to a particular exercise, and some are based upon national subsamples of 365-722 papers—a number sufficiently large to permit generalizations about an entire age group, but not large enough to permit statements about special subpopulations such as rural youngsters of a particular age. To obtain the representative subsamples of descriptive and narrative papers, scientific probability subsamples were drawn from the total National Assessment samples. Small percentages (1%-5%) of these subsamples were nonrateable papers that were excluded from the analysis. The sample sizes used for analyses in this volume appear in Table 2-1, below, and in parentheses (e.g., n = 365) on each table in the text.

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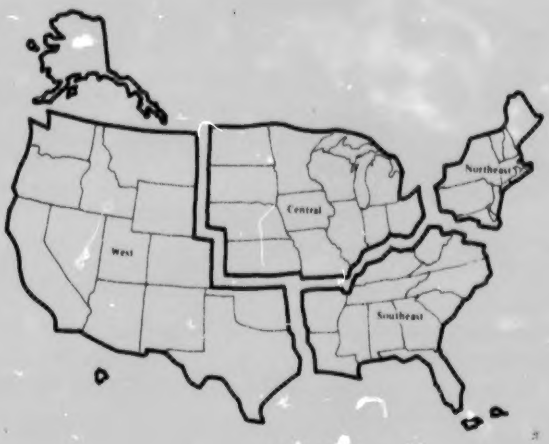
[1] *Although National Assessment included out-of-school 17-year-olds in the 1969 and 1974 assessments, resources did not permit data collection from this group in 1979. Since this report is concerned with changes over time, results are only presented for 17-year-olds attending school for each assessment.*

TABLE 2-1. Sample Sizes for Results Presented in This Volume

Essay	Analysis	No. in Sample 1969	1974	1979
"Describe" (description)	Holistic scoring	365	417	538
	Paragraph coherence	365	417	538
	Syntax and mechanics	365	417	538
"Stork" (narration)	Primary trait scoring	2,073	2,281	2,748
	Cohesion	2,073	2,281	2,748
	Syntax and Mechanics	594	596	722
"Grape Peeler" (expression-humorous)	Primary trait scoring		2,283	2,765
"Rec Center" (persuasion)	Primary trait scoring		2,308	2,784
"Electric Blanket" (explanation-business letter)	Primary trait scoring		2,276	2,781
Background questions			34,211	26,651

Whenever analysis is based upon full samples of 2,000-2,700, we can report results for a number of population groups defined by sex, race, region of the country, parental education, type of community and grade in school. These are defined in Table 2-2. The national subsamples of "Stork" permit reporting for only sex and race; the subsample of "Describe," only sex.

TABLE 2-2. Definitions of Subgroups

Sex	Results are presented for males and females.
Race	Results are presented for black and white students. Data for Hispanic students are not reported because sample sizes for individual items are too small.
Region	Results are presented for the Northeastern, Southeastern, Central and Western regions shown on the following map. 
Parental education	Results are presented for three levels of parental education: (1) those whose parents did not graduate from high school, (2) those who have at least one parent who graduated from high school and (3) those who have at least one parent who has had some post high school education.
Type of community	Three extreme community types of special interest are defined by an occupational profile of the area served by a school, as well as by the size of the community in which the school is located. *Advantaged urban (high metro).* Students in this group attend schools in or around cities having a population greater than 200,000 and where a high proportion of the residents are in professional or managerial employment. *Disadvantaged urban (low metro).* Students in this group attend schools in or around cities having a population greater than 200,000 and where a relatively high proportion of the residents are on welfare or not regularly employed. *Rural.* Students in this group attend schools in areas with a population under 10,000 and where many of the residents are farmers or farm workers.

	This is the only reporting category that excludes a large number of respondents. About two-thirds do not fall into the classifications listed above. Results for the remaining two-thirds are not reported, since their performance is similar to that of the nation.
Grade in school	Results are presented for 17-year-olds in grades 10 (13%), 11 (75%) and 12 (11%).

In reporting group data, the following abbreviations have been used on tables and graphs:

N = Nation
M = Males
F = Females
B = Blacks
W = Whites
SE = Southeast
NE = Northeast
C = Central
W = West
NGH = Parents did not graduate high school
GHS = At least one parent graduated high school
PHS = At least one parent with post high school education
AU = Advantaged urban (high metro)
DU = Disadvantaged urban (low metro)
R = Rural
10 = 10th grade
11 = 11th grade
12 = 12th grade

C. The Writing Exercises, Scoring Approaches and Descriptive Analyses

Details of NAEP exercise development procedures appear in NAEP Report 10-W-40, *Procedural Handbook: 1978-79 Writing Assessment* (1980). Complete documentation of all exercises released after the third assessment of writing, including scoring guides and sample responses, is contained in *The Third Assessment of Writing: 1978-79 Writing Released Exercise Set* (1980).

The writing exercises were created by experienced writing educators. Then they were field tested, refined and reviewed carefully before being used. Each assessment contained exercises assessing several kinds of discourse on the grounds that students may be proficient in some kinds of writing but not in others. Thus, we have gathered information about expressive writing, descriptive or explanatory writing and persuasive writing. Although some of the same skills are involved in each kind of writing, there are challenges and strategies unique to each, as the results amply illustrate. Although an assessment that includes many kinds of writing may be somewhat confusing, it is preferable to an assessment that relies upon a single kind of writing.

Several types of scoring and analysis went into the creation of the data in this report. Each is briefly described below and illustrated in the text and appendixes. Readers desiring more information about these procedures should consult the handbook and exercise set cited above, as well as Mullis (1980), Mullis and Mellon (1980), Brown (1979), which also cite additional references. For each procedure, raters scored a random mixture of papers collected from the different assessments. Each kind of scoring was done by a different group of scorers.

Holistic Scoring

When readers holistically score papers, they do not focus upon particular aspects of a paper such as mechanics or ideas or organization. Rather, they concentrate upon forming an overall impression of each paper relative to the other papers they have read. Their primary task is to rank order the papers from best to worst, not to identify errors or to specify writing problems.

Results for the holistic scoring reported in this volume involved several steps. First, the table leaders—all of whom were experienced holistic readers—surveyed the pool of papers from all three assessments and selected examples of papers representing four levels of quality. Then, they developed guidelines describing each level of quality and how to distinguish between top-half and bottom-half papers. The scoring session began with some discussion of the characteristics of the anchor papers and guidelines, and then several practice scorings of other papers to refine the scoring scale description and iron out discrepancies among readers. When all readers were comfortable with the guidelines (see Appendix A), they scored papers for an hour, after which they discussed more anchor papers. Throughout the subsequent scoring there were periodic discussions of papers to insure that readers continued to hold to the same standards.

Reliability of scoring was checked by having a random 10% of the papers read by pairs of readers who were matched to detect potential discrepancies. The readers agreed on 79% of the papers.

Papers from all three assessments were holistically scored at the same scoring session to make sure that all were evaluated by the same standards.

The Primary Trait Scoring System (PTS)

The primary trait approach to essay evaluation involves isolating an important writing skill, developing a task to measure it and articulating four levels of proficiency. When a reader is rating papers for PTS, he or she is rating each paper against criteria spelled out in the scoring guide instead of rating each paper in terms of the entire pool of papers. Thus, whereas a holistic scoring aims to distribute a pool of papers over a "bell shaped curve," a PTS scoring will only distribute papers according to their relationship to the scoring criteria. If none of the papers meet the criteria for the highest rating, then so be it; the object is to describe the papers, not rank order them.

Holistic scoring enables one to determine if a group of papers written at one time is better than a group written at another time but it does not provide much specific information about how the two groups differ. Primary trait scoring provides specific information about particular rhetorical aspects of papers, but does not provide information about overall quality. Thus, it is useful to do both kinds of evaluation whenever possible.

Training for PTS scoring involves thorough discussion of the writing assignment, scoring guide and sample papers. If the assignment has been constructed to elicit evidence of proficiency in a particular writing skill, it should explicitly establish the writing situation, specifying the purpose of the communication, the audience and what must be accomplished. The instructions should unambiguously tell the writer what is required, and the scoring guide should unambiguously define four levels of proficiency in the primary skill being assessed. Generally, level "1" indicates no evidence of the skill; level "2," marginal evidence; level "3," solid performance; and level "4," very good performance. Scorers discuss each level and study papers exemplifying each until everyone feels comfortable with the system. Then scoring commences, with periodic discussion of troublesome papers. All papers were rated independently by two scorers, with disagreements being reconciled by a third scorer. Agreement between the first two scorers ranged from 91% to 97% for the sets of papers included in this report.

Some PTS exercises require readers to look for secondary aspects of the papers as well. For instance, the primary focus of the "Electric Blanket" exercise is upon ability to explain a situation clearly enough to correct a misunderstanding. However, scorers also categorized such secondary matters as whether or not the letters contained specific dates, names and references to documents.

Scoring guides for all PTS exercises appear in Appendix A.

Cohesion

The term cohesion refers in general to the many ways words and ideas are linked together in writing to create a sense of wholeness and coherence. The cohesion scoring (see guide, Appendix A) required readers to sort papers into groups representing four degrees of cohesiveness. Papers in the lowest group (level 1) display no or few connections between sentences and are loosely structured. Papers in the next group (level 2) display attempts to tie ideas together here or there but do not show any unifying structure. Cohesive papers (level 3) display gathering and ordering of details and ideas, and fully coherent papers (level 4) display a number of strategies and devices that bind the narrative into a unified whole.

Readers discussed the scoring criteria, sample papers and cohesive ties and strategies before undertaking the scoring. Scoring proceeded very much like the scoring for PTS, with periodic checks for consistency and reliability. Also, as with the PTS evaluations, each paper was rated by at least two readers. The percent of agreement was 93% to 94% for each of the three sets of papers.

Syntax and Mechanics

In addition to being rated for quality, the "Stork" and "Describe" papers were also analyzed in terms of their syntactic and "mechanical" features. Syntax refers to the ways in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Mechanics refers to the ways in which writers handle basic conventions of writing such as punctuation, spelling or word choice. A syntactic analysis involves breaking each paper up into its "T-units" (a T-unit is a main clause with all its attendant modifying words, phrases and dependent clauses) and examining the ways in which writers embed information in T-units and join T-units together. A mechanics analysis involves classifying the kinds of errors writers make in sentence use, punctuation, spelling, and so forth.

Both kinds of analysis were done by experienced English teachers thoroughly trained in grammar, usage and linguistics. After the papers had been coded by two to four scorers for sentence types, T-units, embedding, modification, conjoining, mechanics errors and the like, the coded essays were keypunched and the results tabulated to produce the results presented in this report.

Outlines listing the syntactic features analyzed in this report appear in Appendix B. More complete information is also available in Mullis and Mellon (1980).

D. The Analysis and Data Presentation

National Assessment reports the performance of groups of students, not individuals. For primary trait and cohesion ratings, the basic measure of achievement reported is the percentage of papers at each score level or a combination of the best score levels. Increases or decreases in the percentage of good responses between assessments are used to indicate trends in achievement for an age level or a subpopulation of interest.

Tables presenting primary trait results offer percentages for score points 1, 2, 3 and 4, as well as for 2, 3 and 4 combined, 3 and 4 combined, and 0 (nonrateable). The 0 category includes people who did not respond to the exercise, wrote on an altogether different topic or wrote so illegibly their papers could not be scored. Holistic scoring information is presented in terms of percentages of papers at each score point and average performance each assessment year.

For the descriptive information about syntax and mechanics, data are presented to illustrate the range of performances as well as the average performance. Syntax and mechanics tables present means, medians, quartiles and the top deciles. The mean, of course, is an average across all the papers. Quartiles present a more accurate picture of the entire distribution by providing information about the bottom one-fourth of the papers (Q1), the center point (median) and the three-fourths point (Q3). The top decile (90%) tells us about the top 10% of the distribution. "Bottom" and "top" do not refer to quality judgments; rather they refer to the least of whatever is being counted (e.g., words per sentence) and the most. Thus, Q1 describes the low end of the distribution of adverbial modifications or number of complex sentences per paper or number of misspellings. These tables, then, should help the reader to see the range of the papers—something that averages tend to obscure.

Because the numbers and percentages presented in this report are based upon samples, they are necessarily estimates, not definitive figures. They are, of course, our best estimates; but they are subject to the qualification that a certain amount of measurement and nonmeasurement error creeps into even the best estimates. Thus, for example, the figure 20% is really 20% plus or minus a certain (usually small) margin of error.

National Assessment computes standard errors that estimate the sampling error and other random error associated with the assessment of a specific item. NAEP has adhered to the standard convention whereby differences between statistics are designated as statistically significant only if the differences are at least twice as large as their standard errors. Differences this large would occur by chance in fewer than 5% of all possible replications of the sampling, data collection and scoring procuedres for any particular age group or reporting group. If a national figure was 20% and if the standard error of the female percentage was .5 points, 22% would be "significantly" (in the statistical sense) different from 20%, because it is more than twice the standard error away from 20%. But if the percentage for females was 20.5%, it would not be at least twice the standard error of the change estimate away, so it would not be termed a statistically significant difference.

Group differences and change differences are asterisked in this report if they are statistically significant in the sense just described. If, in the appendix tables, a group difference from the national percentage is asterisked, it represents a statistically significant difference. If it is not asterisked, we are less confident that the two numbers differ. The same applies to any change percentage: an asterisk indicates statistically significant change, and no asterisk indicates that there may not be a difference between the figures. It is important, however, to distinguish statistical significance from educational significance. A difference of 3 or 4 points between group and national performance might be statistically significant but too small to merit serious educational concern. One can also imagine a situation in which many changes are negative but no one of them is statistically significant; it could be that the overall pattern of negative changes has educational significance. Readers must decide for themselves how important particular changes or differences are in the real world, for statistical conventions can aid, but not replace, good judgment.

CHAPTER 3

THE WRITING OF 17-YEAR-OLDS

A. How Good Are the Papers?

Five pieces written by 17-year-olds were scored for quality. One of them—a descriptive essay—was scored holistically, along lines explained in Chapter 2. Holistic scoring involves training a group of teachers to read a large sample of essays and order them, in terms of their general quality, from worst to best. The scorers have general guidelines (see Appendix A) and papers exemplifying four levels of quality. They train on the sample papers until they achieve consistency. Then, they read each paper, form a general impression of its overall quality relative to the other papers they have read and assign it a score from 1 to 4. Some papers are read by all the scorers so that monitors can check reliability.

Responses to the other four writing tasks were scored for their rhetorical effectiveness (the degree to which they meet the demands of the situation established by the task). The guidelines for rating responses specify four levels of quality ranging from inadequate to very good. Inadequate papers generally do not address the situation (a situation includes a reason for writing, an audience and an appropriate mode of discourse) or do so only barely or vaguely, whereas adequate papers reflect control of the skills the exercise demands. More detail on this approach, called the primary trait system (PTS), appears in Mullis (1980). The guides that are described in this section and in Appendix A will also clarify the approach. The important thing to keep in mind is that holistic scoring involves judging the paper as a whole, whereas primary trait scoring limits judgments to clearly specified rhetorical aspects of the papers and ignores other features, such as mechanics.

1. Holistic Judgment of a Descriptive Exercise, 1969, 1974, 1979

The National Assessment did not conduct three separate holistic scorings in order to gather the change data described in this chapter. Rather, papers written in all three years were randomly ordered into a single pool and scored in a single session. The scorers did not know in which year any particular paper was written, so they necessarily applied the same criteria to all papers. After the scoring, the ratings were examined to determine whether those papers written in different years were perceived, as a group, to be worse or better than the others.

The assignment appears in Appendix A. Briefly, it asked students to describe something they know about—some familiar place or thing—in such a way that it could be recognized by someone who read the description.

Table 3-1 and Exhibit 3-1 display the percentages of papers at each score point in 1969, 1974 and 1979 and changes in the mean holistic score over the 10-year period.

TABLE 3-1. Percentages of Descriptive Papers at Each Holistic Score Point, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

Year	Holistic Score					
	1	2	3	4	3 & 4	Mean
1969 (n = 365)	12.1%	40.3%	31.8%	15.9%	47.7%	2.54
1974 (n = 417)	14.9	38.8	32.6	13.7	46.3	2.52
1979 (n = 538)	11.9	46.5	28.8	12.8	41.6	2.43
Change						
1969-74	2.8	-1.5	0.8	-2.2	-1.4	-0.02
1974-79	-3.0	7.7	-3.8	-0.9	-4.7	-0.09
1969-79	-0.2	6.2	-3.0	-3.1	-6.1	-0.11

†Percentages may not total due to rounding.

If means are the most important indicators, little has changed over the decade. The mean holistic score of the 1979 papers was .11 lower than the mean of the 1969 papers. This is not a statistically significant drop, so we cannot say with certainty that there has been a change of any magnitude.

However, there are indicators that the 1979 papers were, as a group, somewhat lower in quality than the earlier papers. To begin with, over the last 10 years 6% of the papers seem to have moved out of score points 3 and 4 and into score point 2. Secondly, 58% of the 1979 papers fell into levels 1 and 2, compared with 52% in 1969 and 54% in 1974. And finally, when these two groups of papers were evaluated holistically in 1974, the 1974 papers were considered poorer than the 1969 papers (see NAEP Report 05-W-01, *Writing Mechanics, 1969-74*); but in 1979, when the new papers were added to the pool, they apparently caused a redefinition of the readers' concept of "poor." The 1979 papers were enough worse than the others to make the 1969 and 1974 papers more like each other than like the recent papers.

In summary, then, the most accurate appraisal of the holistic data is this: little has changed over the decade, but what changes there are suggest a slight drop in the quality of the papers. There are no signs of a major slide in writing performance on this exercise. But neither are there any signs of improvement.

2. Judgments of Rhetorical Skill

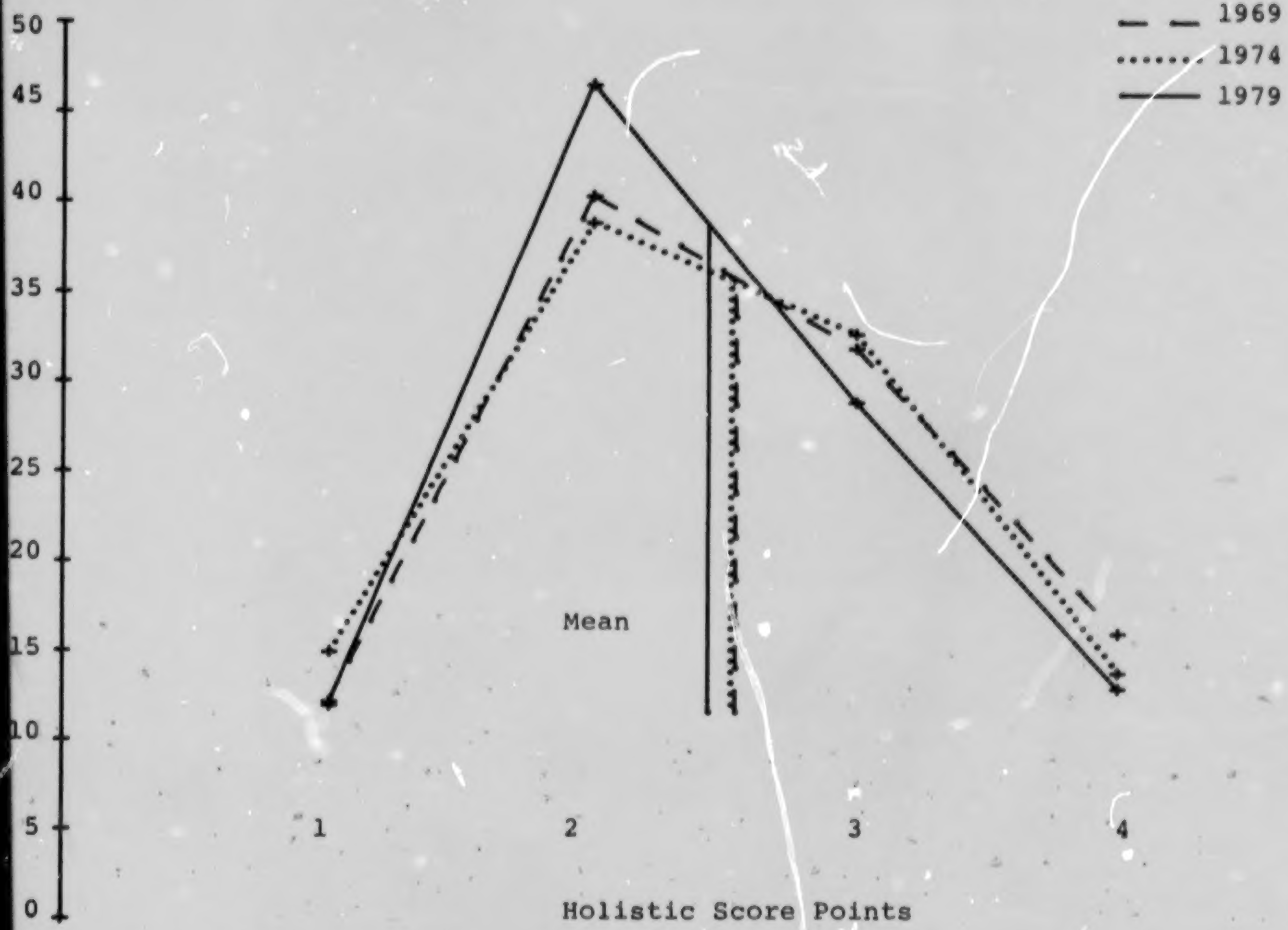
Rhetorical skills are critical to effective writing. A job application letter, for instance, may be beautifully composed and error free but ineffective because the writer used the wrong tone, did not include information the reader needed or provided far more information than the reader required. Accordingly, the assessment includes a number of different tasks calling for different kinds of rhetorical skills in different kinds of discourse. Seventeen-year-olds were given two expressive, one persuasive and one explanatory writing tasks. No single student was required to do more than one writing task because the tasks were administered to separate national samples of students.

a. Expressive Writing

In addition to the descriptive essay, 17-year-olds were also asked to write a fictional narrative and a humorous letter, both of which were considered "expressive" tasks—that is, writing primarily for fun and self-expression rather than some other purpose, such as explanation. The narrative assignment was to look at a picture of a stork and then make up a story about it. (See Appendix A for the complete assignment.)

The students were given 25 minutes in which to write. In effect, they created first-draft, not polished or edited, narratives.

EXHIBIT 3–1. Distributions of Descriptive Papers
Across Four Holistic Score Points, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979



The instructions are to write a story, so the papers were first scored in terms of storytelling skills. In prticular, scorers were looking for a consistent point of view, sustained narrative structures and amplifying details. Papers were rated from a score of 1 (poor) to 4 (good) according to the following criteria, detailed in Appendix A:

1 = *No evidence of storytelling.* These responses either accumulate details without a situation to anchor and unite them, or they add just a few descriptive details to one of the situations provided in the instructions.

2 = *Some evidence of storytelling.* These responses attempt the basic task of storytelling by inventing a situation to account for the bird. However, the fictional demands are fundamentally unfulfilled either because the plot is only barely outlined, the story rambles on without structure, the story is imcomplete or the story is really several unconnected stories.

3 = *Clear evidence of storytelling.* These responses clearly show evidence of the storyteller's obligation to structure a plot and elaborate it with appropriate details.

4 = *Structured and complete storytelling.* These responses tell a complete story, amply as well as appropriately detailed at all points, and fully as well as consistently resolved.

Examples of papers in each category appear in Appendix A.

Note that in this scoring of the papers, the focus was upon rhetorical competence, not mechanics spelling, and so forth. Those aspects of the papers are dealt with later in this chapter. Here we are only concerned with the percentages of students displaying the narrative skills elicited by the exercise. Those skills—control of point of view, ability to sustain an explanatory framework and ability to use details in order to advance a narrative or make it entertaining—are as useful in nonfiction writing as they are in fiction. Although one cannot conclude that students who do poorly on this task will never display them on some other, less inventive task, one probably can conclude that students who do well on this task are likely to have those skills available for other kinds of writing.

As it happens, three-quarters of the 17-year-olds' papers were scored 3 or 4, indicating that the vast majority have access to these skills (Table 3-2). This represents an increase of 10 percentage points since 1969.

TABLE 3-2. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Stork" Exercise, 1969, 1974, 1979†

Year				Score Point			
	Non-rateable	Inadequate	Some Storytelling	Storytelling	Full Storytelling	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1969 (n = 2,073)	1.0%	1.8%	32.7%	56.5%	8.0%	97.2%	64.5%
1974 (n = 2,281)	1.5	2.7	36.4	51.5	7.8	95.8	59.4
1979 (n = 2,748)	0.9	1.1	23.1	64.7	10.2	98.0	74.8
Change							
1969-74	0.5	0.9	3.7	-5.0*	-0.2	-1.4	-5.2*
1974-79	-0.6	-1.6*	-13.3*	13.1*	2.3	2.2*	15.4*
1969-79	-0.1	-0.7	-9.5*	8.1*	2.1	0.8	10.3*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

Group differences appear in Appendix C, Table C-1, while group results vis-a-vis the nation are displayed in Exhibits 3-2 and 3-3. Several points about both national and group trends seem noteworthy.

First, if categories 2, 3 and 4 are combined, little appears to have happened over the decade. However, if one examines the percentages at each score point, it is clear that there was considerable movement out of category 2 into category 3 between the second and third assessments.

Second, females continue to write better than males, as a group, and the difference between them (on levels 3 and 4 combined) has stayed constant over the decade—about 17-20 points.

Third, while the nation declined between 1969 and 1974, blacks did not. The difference between the blacks and the national performance levels shrank on 3 and 4 combined from 25 points in 1969 to 16 points in 1979. Nearly 20% more papers written by blacks were scored 3 or 4 in 1979 than were in 1969.

Fourth, the disadvantaged-urban group (largely comprising inner-city youth) shows consistent improvement from assessment to assessment, cutting its difference (on 3 and 4 combined) from the national level from 18 to 12 points. Sixteen percent more wrote competent papers in 1979 than did so a decade earlier.

Fifth, advantaged-urban students (largely from suburban schools), who enjoyed a 14-point advantage over the nation a decade ago, show little or no advantage today. The change is not so much a consequence of their writing fewer good papers (79% of their papers were rated 3 or 4 in both 1969 and 1979) as it is a consequence of the improvement for the other groups.

Sixth, students from the Southeastern states improved from assessment to assessment, with the result that their percentage of papers rated 3 or 4 no longer differs statistically from the nation's.

The "Stork" exercise is only one of many expressive tasks the teenagers could have been asked to perform. That it would be dangerous to generalize too freely from such a task is amply demonstrated by the results of the other expressive task, in response to which there were far fewer successful papers.

The second expressive task, used only in the 1974 and 1979 assessments, required students to write a humorous letter about an electric grape peeler. The full text of the assignment and the scoring guide appear in Appendix A. Briefly, the four score points were these:

1 = *Serious discourse*. These are papers in which the writers seem to take the instruction to write a letter as a test of business skill. All such responses—no matter how well done—do not demonstrate an attempt at humor on any level, verbal or situational.

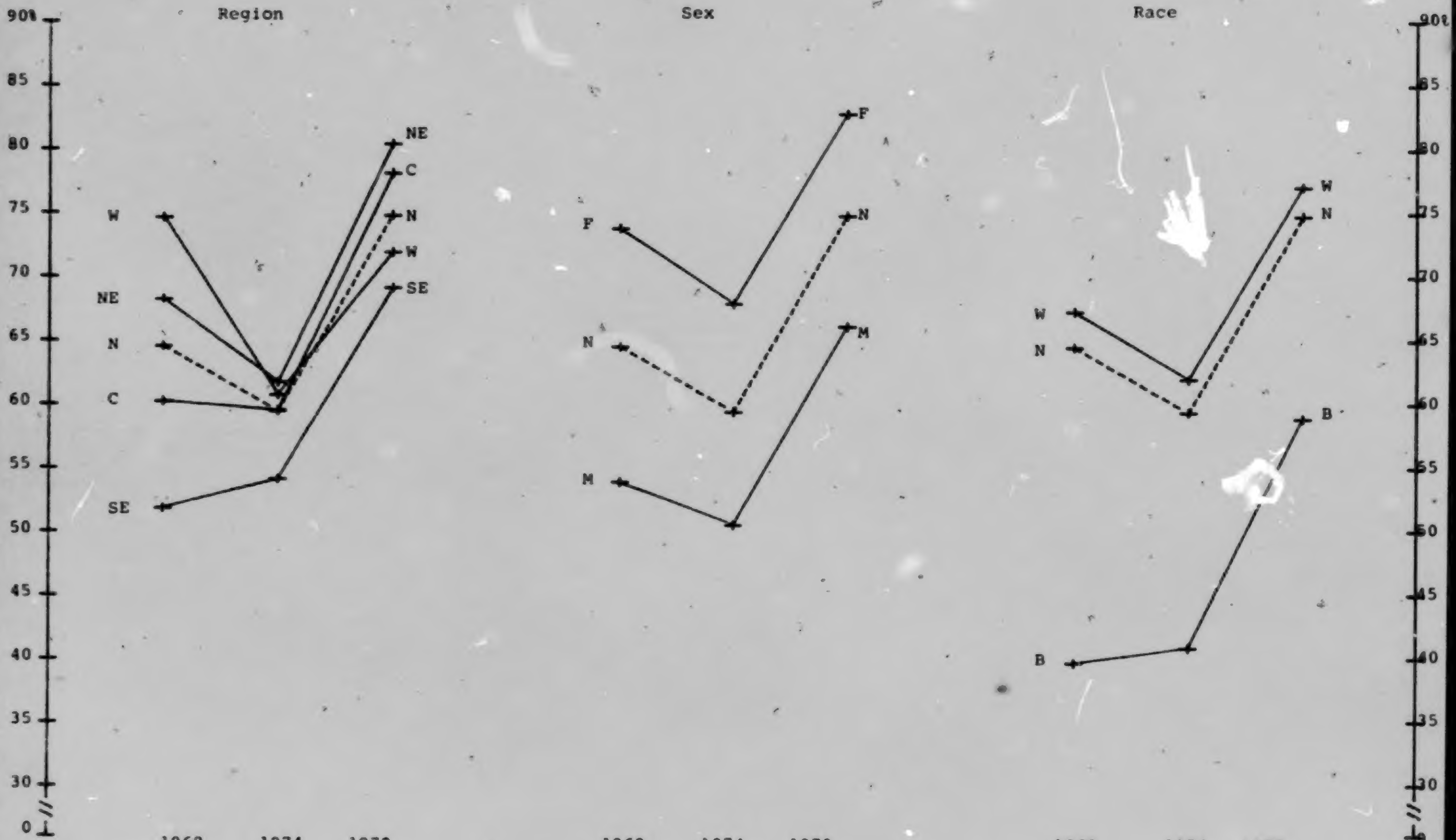
2 = *Ambiguous discourse*. These are papers that are neither clearly funny nor clearly straightforward and serious. These papers do not contain any sure cues of humor, but there may be suspicious amounts of extra detail, or slightly excessive repetition of funny details from the directive.

3 = *Humor in passing*. These are papers that contain plays on language, funny names or other verbal or situational symptoms of humor but that do not offer much extension of the fictional situation itself. These writers are clearly amused and give evidence of entering into the spirit of having fun but stay fairly close to the already established absurdity, limiting themselves largely to linguistic byplay.

4 = *Humorous discourse*. The entire response or a substantial portion of it is an extended joke or a series of verbal plays. Some of these papers may achieve extended humor through sustained irony, and many will contain various kinds of word play, such as puns, sound effects or far-fetched metaphors.

This writing task calls for some obvious qualifiers, of course. People have different senses of humor, and some undoubtedly would not find the situation particularly funny or worth trying to be

EXHIBIT 3–2. Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979

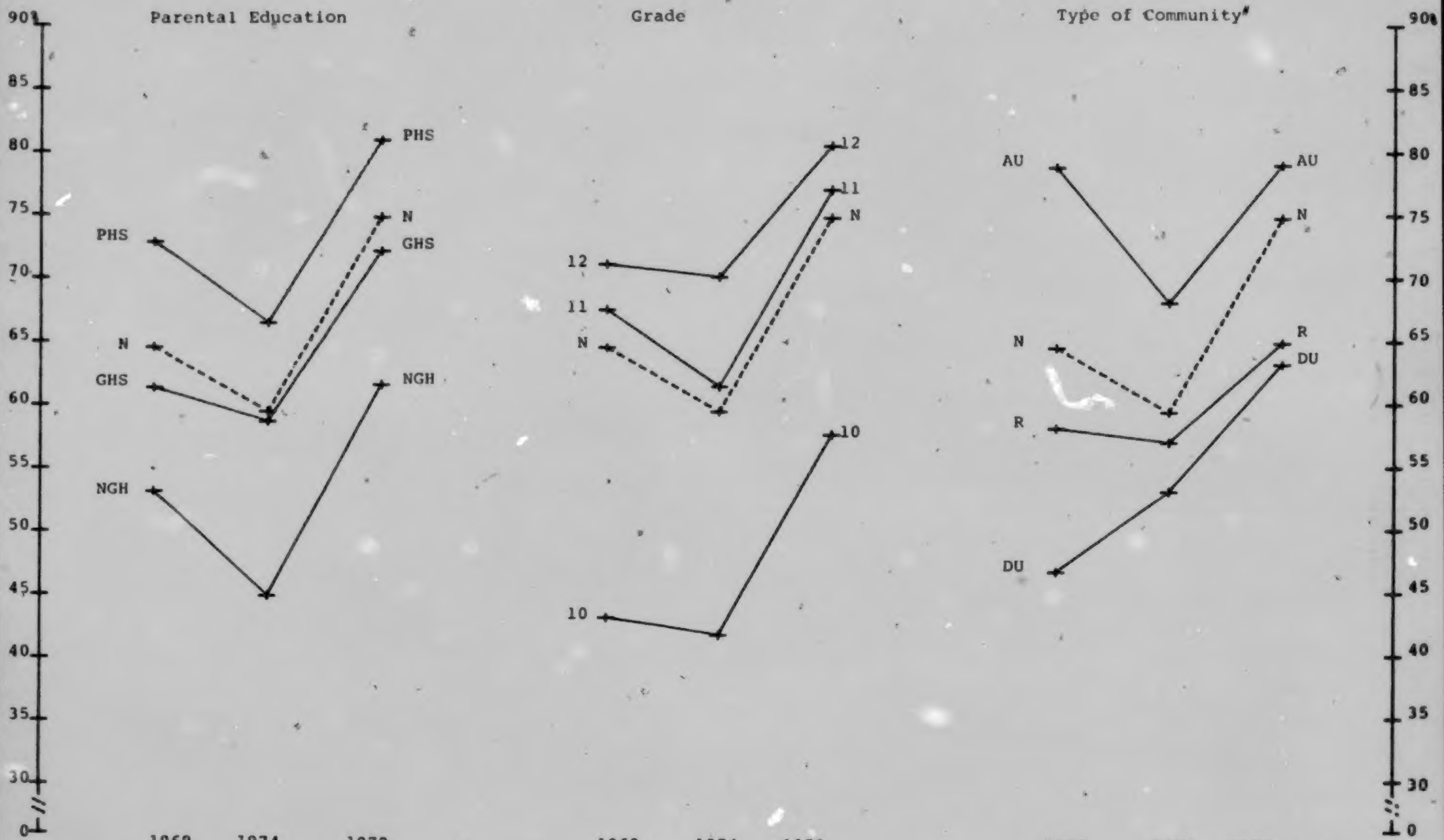


	1969	1974	1979
NE	68.2%	61.7%	80.4%
W	74.6	60.7	71.9
C	60.2	59.5	78.1
SE	51.8	54.1	69.1
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

	1969	1974	1979
F	73.8%	67.9%	82.8%
M	53.9	50.5	66.1
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

	1969	1974	1979
W	67.3%	62.0%	77.1%
B	39.7	40.9	58.9
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

EXHIBIT 3–2 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979**



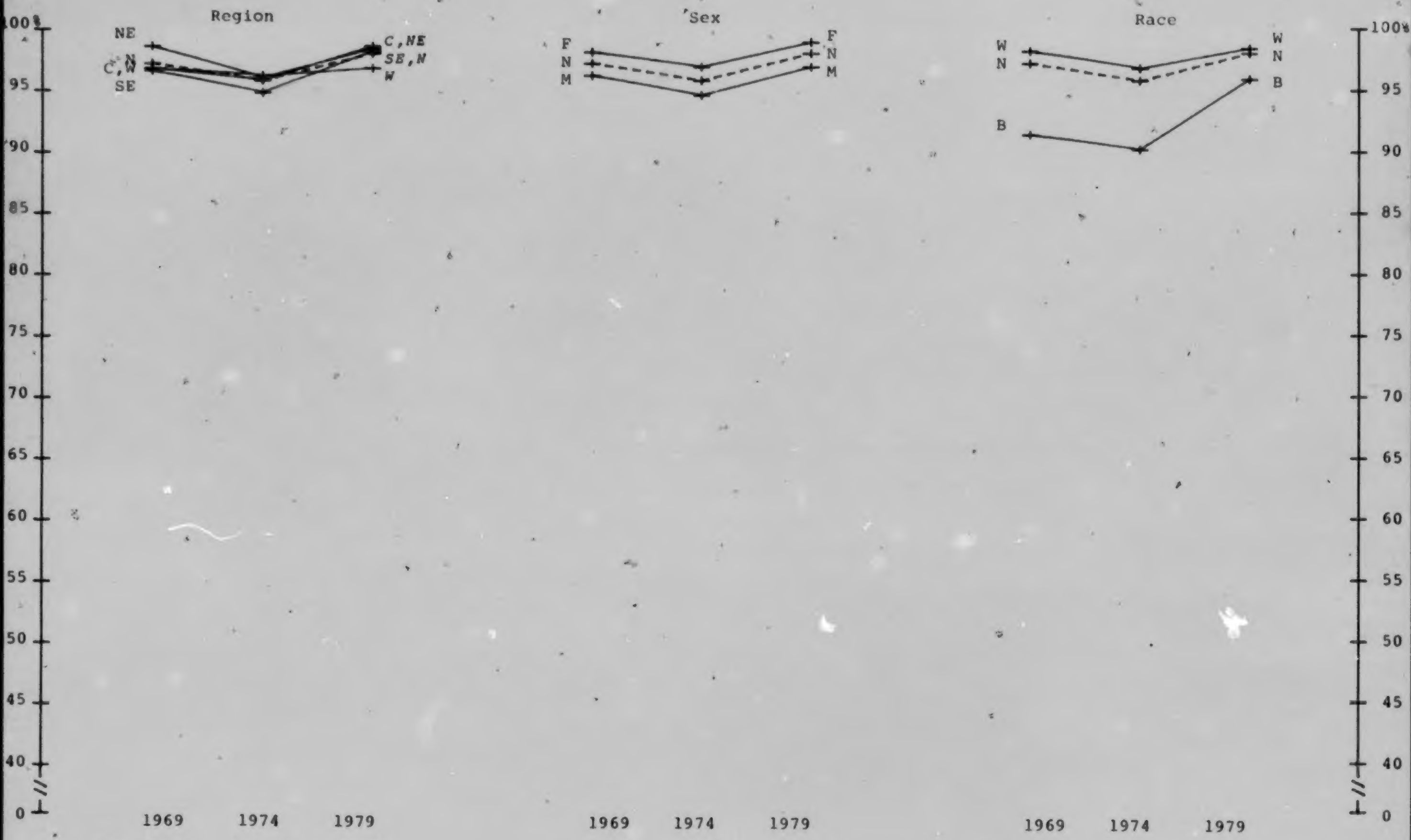
	1969	1974	1979
PHS	72.8%	66.4%	80.9%
GHS	61.3	58.5	72.1
NGH	53.1	44.8	61.5
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

	1969	1974	1979
12	71.1%	70.1%	80.5%
11	67.5	61.4	77.0
10	43.1	41.7	57.6
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

	1969	1974	1979
AU	78.8%	68.1%	79.0%
R	58.1	57.0	64.9
DU	46.7	53.1	63.2
N	64.5	59.4	74.8

These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–3. Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979

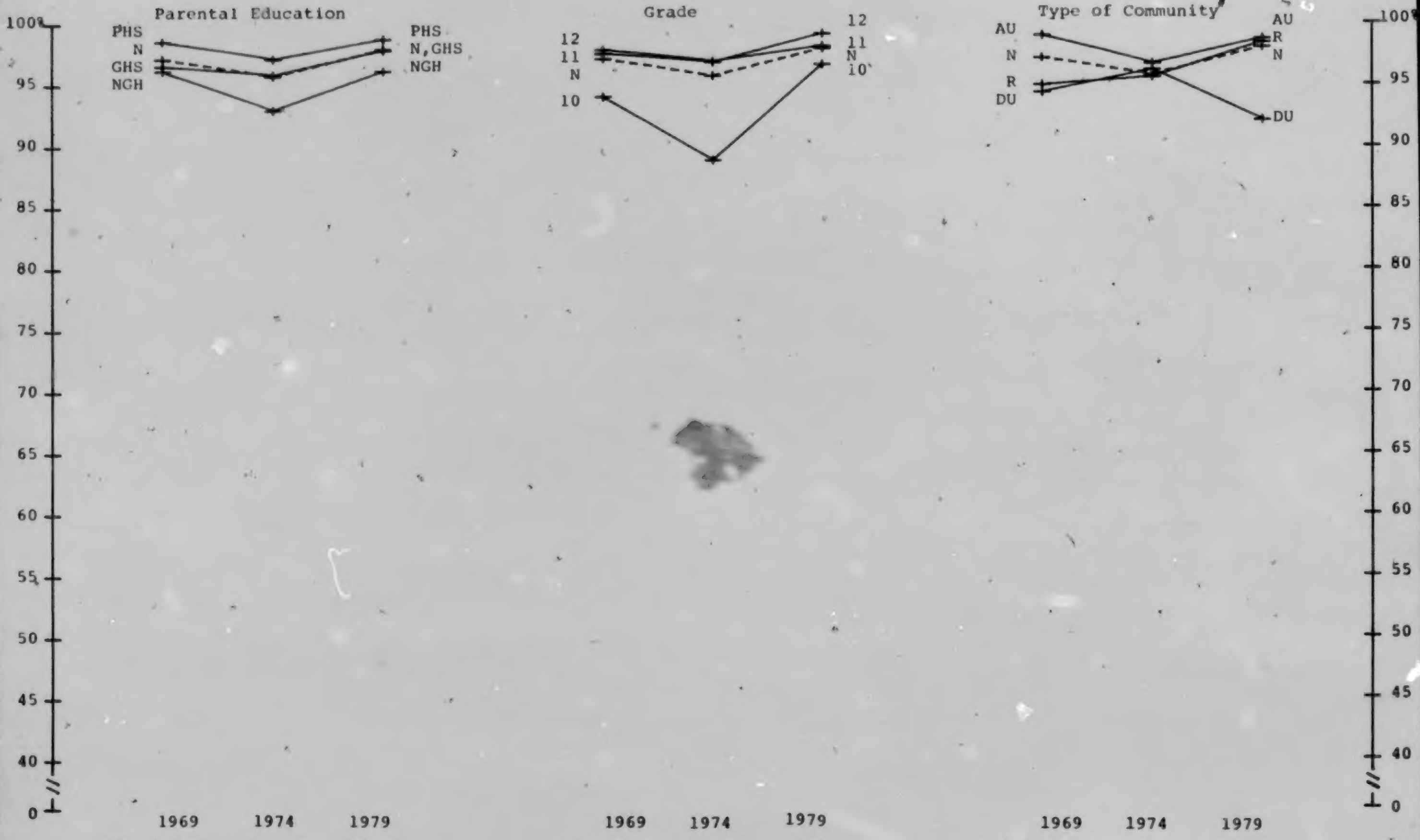


	1969	1974	1979
NE	98.6%	96.0%	98.4%
W	96.8	96.2	96.8
C	96.8	95.8	98.6
SE	96.6	94.8	98.2
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

	1969	1974	1979
F	98.1%	96.9%	98.9%
M	96.2	94.6	96.9
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

	1969	1974	1979
W	98.2%	96.8%	98.4%
B	91.4	90.2	95.9
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

EXHIBIT 3–3 *(Continued).* Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979



	1969	1974	1979
PHS	98.6%	97.2%	98.8%
GHS	96.6	95.9	97.9
NGH	96.2	93.0	96.2
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

	1969	1974	1979
12	97.6%	96.9%	99.2%
11	97.9	97.0	98.2
10	94.1	88.9	96.7
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

	1969	1974	1979
AU	99.0%	96.7%	98.7%
R	95.0	95.6	98.4
DU	94.4	96.2	92.1
N	97.2	95.8	98.0

[#] *These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.*

funny about. Humor involves some risk, as everyone who has told a joke at which no one laughs knows. Some students may find it hard to be funny during an assessment or hard to believe that the assessors really want humor.

On the other hand, some students may write well enough, but they are simply not skilled at humorous writing, and that is worth investigating. Humorous writing has often been termed the most difficult kind to do well, probably because it requires both a particular attitude and an arsenal of rather sophisticated weapons such as irony, hyperbole and general verbal dexterity. The comic writer has such control over language that she/he can play with it. We would not expect, therefore, that a great many 17-year-olds would do well on this task.

The results bear this out (Table 3-3).

TABLE 3-3. Percentage of 17-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Grape Peeler" Exercise 1974, 1979†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rateable	Serious	Ambiguous	Some Humor	Humorous	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1974 (n = 2,283)	1.2%	60.8%	20.1%	12.8%	5.0%	37.9%	17.9%
1979 (n = 2,765)	1.2	62.6	20.6	11.3	4.2	36.2	15.6
Change 1974-79	0.0	1.8	0.5	-1.5	-0.8	-1.8	-2.3

†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

Almost two-thirds of the teenagers' papers received the lowest score, undoubtedly for all of the reasons mentioned above and more. And the proportion has not changed appreciably since 1974.

Table C-3 in Appendix C presents the differences between group results and national results, and Exhibits 3-4 and 3-5 display group results. The data suggest that Southeastern students did not do as well recently as they did in 1974 (contrary to their performance on the stork exercise). In the 1974 assessment, 40% of them received scores of 2, 3 or 4, but in 1979, the percentage dropped to 30%.

Males did slightly better, as a group, than females in 1974, but by 1979 their advantage disappeared.

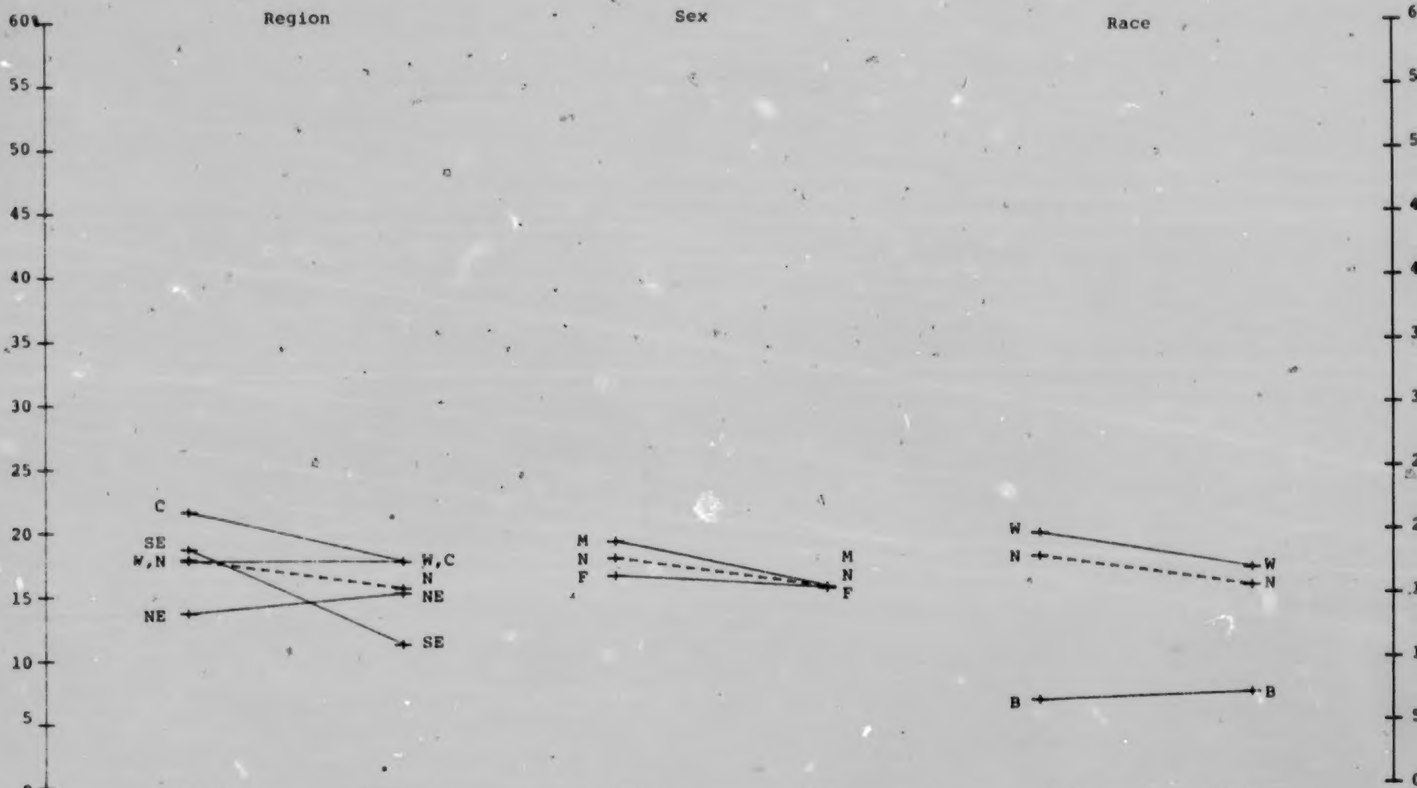
The disadvantaged-urban students, as a group, improved somewhat on the percentage of 2, 3 or 4 papers, cutting their difference from the nation from 13 points to 7 points.

The humorous papers (rated 3 and 4) were humorous for a variety of reasons, but three general categories of humorous devices stand out. The most prevalent strategy was to set up bizarre situations either by carrying the given premise to greater extremes or by creating an entirely new fantasy world in which grape peelers are everyday appliances, less unusual than many other things. About three-quarters of the humorous papers employed these approaches.

A second general strategy was to employ verbal wit—allusions, puns or bizarre signatures. About half the humorous papers contained some witticism or other.

A third, seldom used, approach was to use

EXHIBIT 3–4. Group Changes in Percentages of "Grape Peeler" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

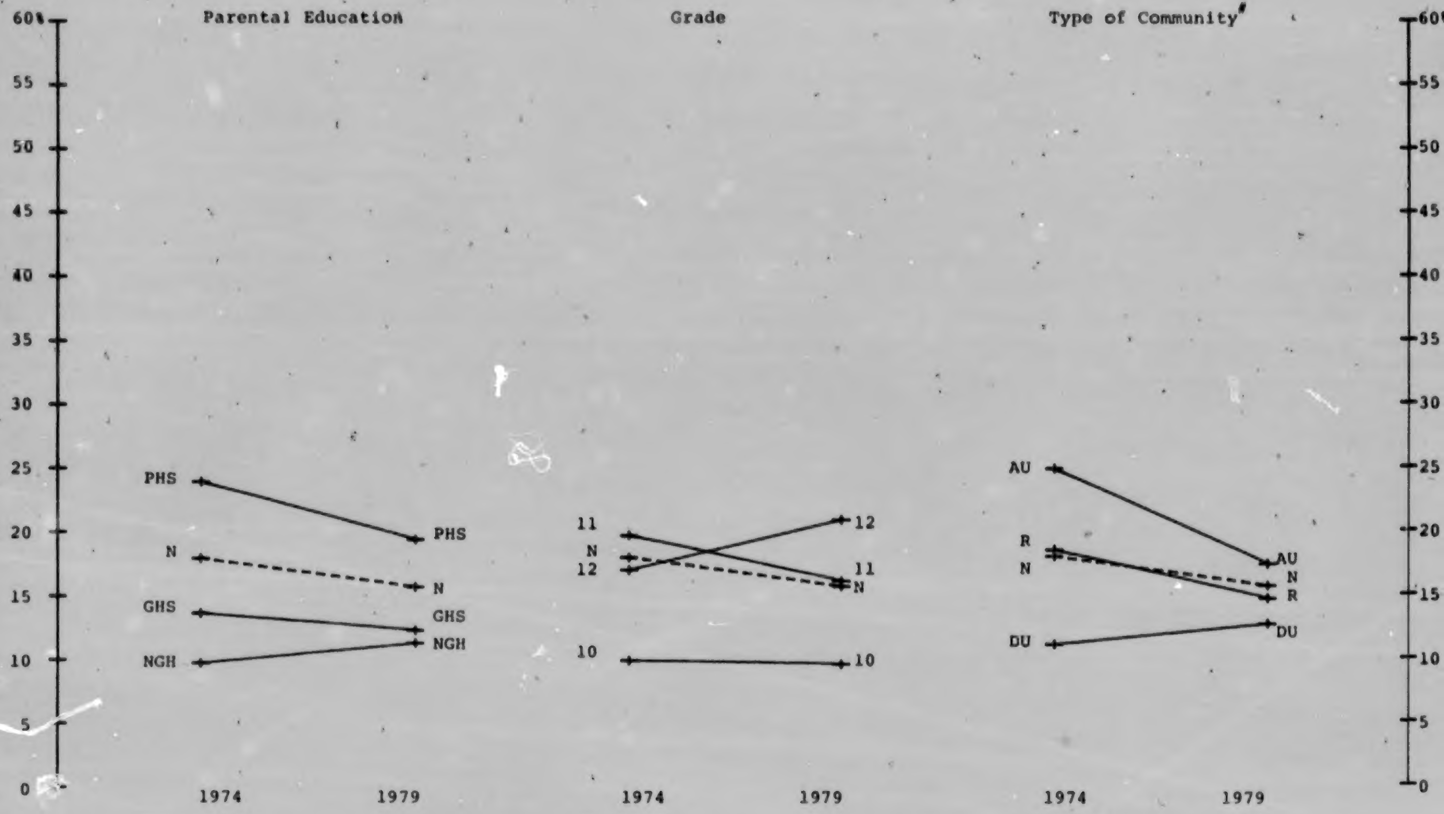


	1974	1979
NE	13.7%	15.2%
W	17.8	17.7
C	21.6	17.7
SE	18.7	11.2
N	17.9	15.6

	1974	1979
F	16.5%	15.5%
M	19.2	15.6
N	17.9	15.6

	1974	1979
W	19.7%	17.0%
B	6.6	7.2
N	17.9	15.6

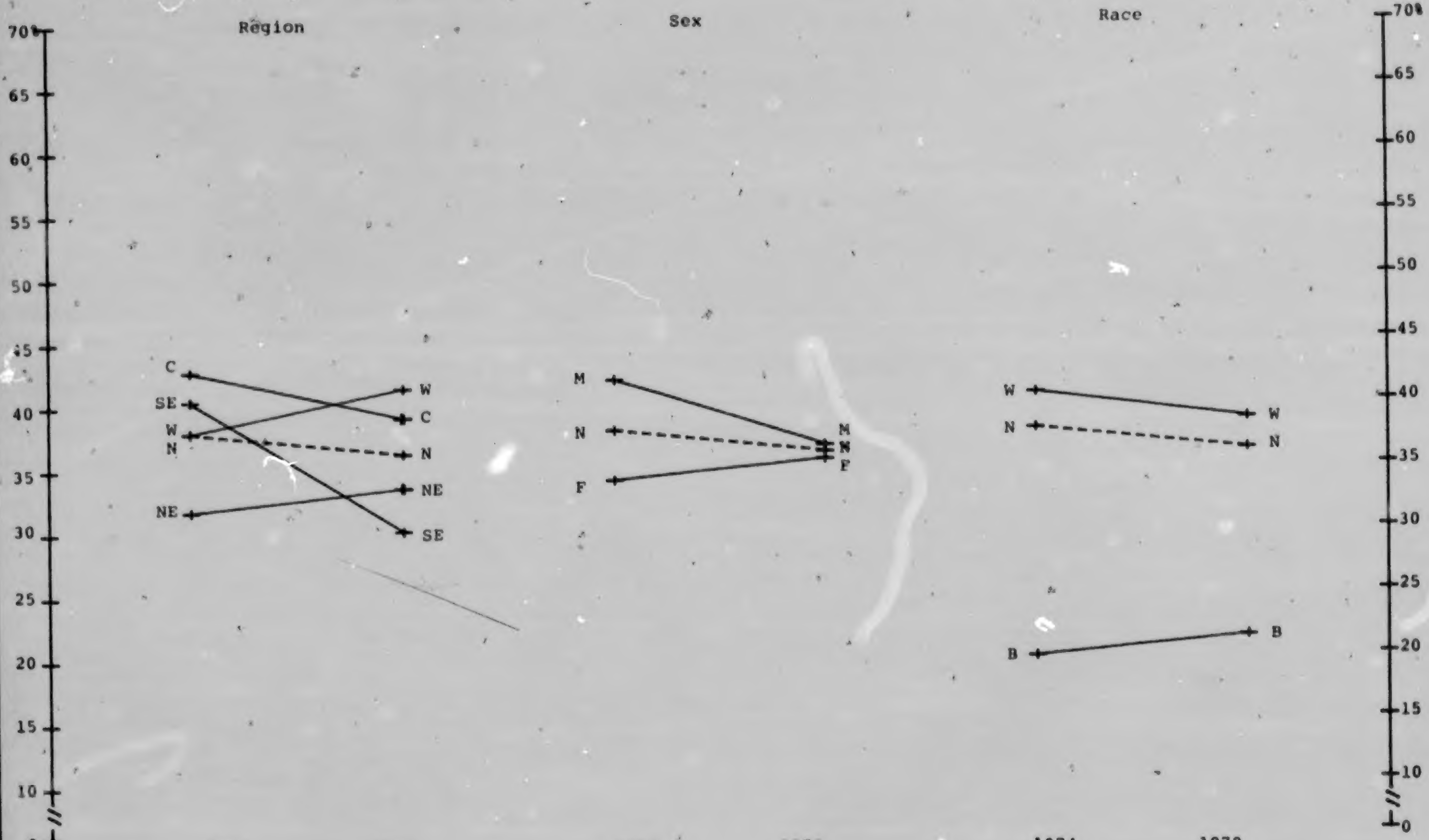
EXHIBIT 3–4 *(Continued).* Group Changes in Percentages of "Grape Peeler" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979



	1974	1979		1974	1979		1974	1979
PHS	23.9%	19.3%	12	16.9%	20.8%	AU	24.8%	17.3%
GHS	13.6	12.2	11	19.6	16.0	R	18.4	14.6
NGH	9.7	11.2	10	9.8	9.5	DU	11.0	12.6
N	17.9	15.6	N	17.9	15.6	N	17.9	15.6

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–5. Group Changes in Percentages of "Grape Peeler" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

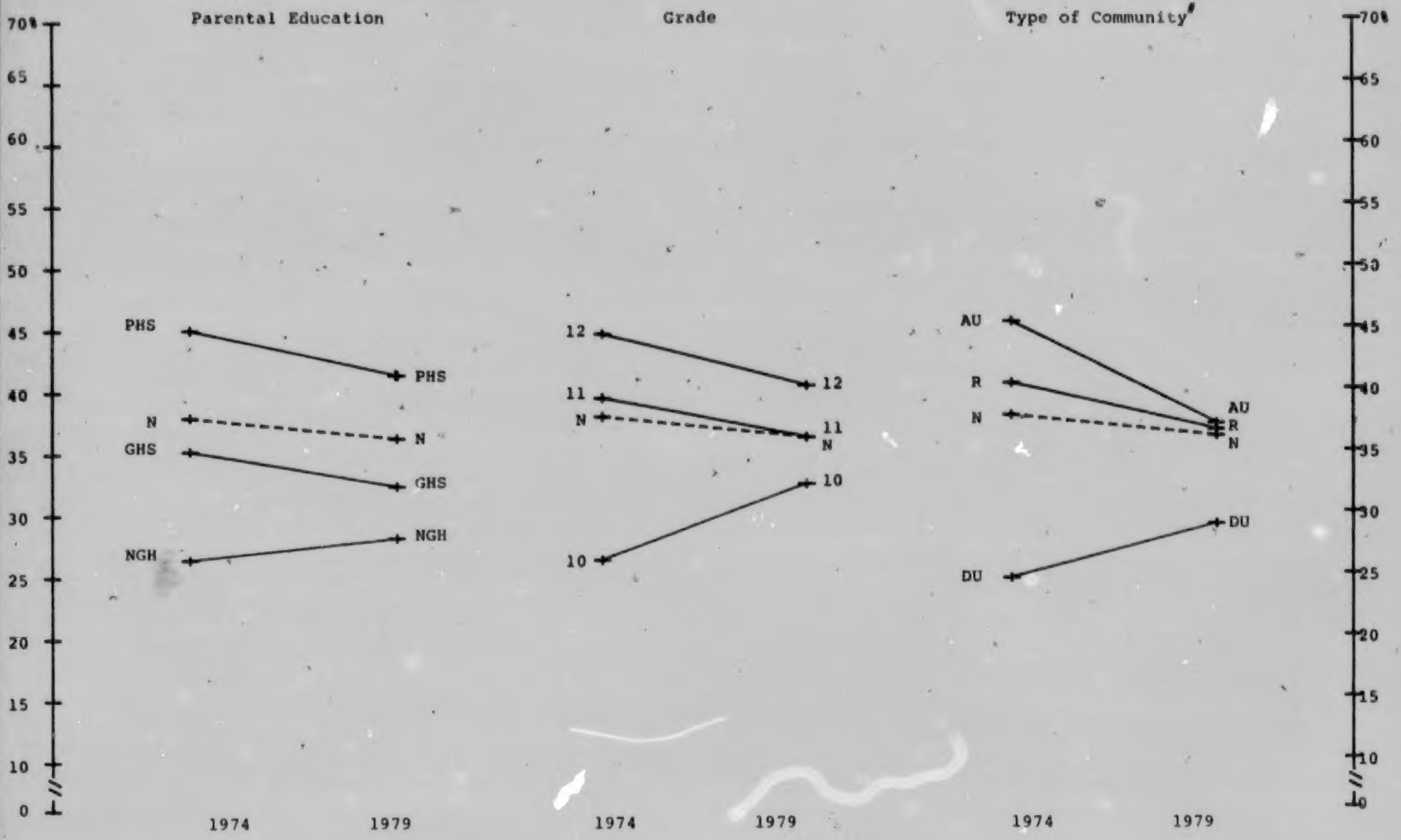


	1974	1979
NE	31.7%	33.5%
W	37.9	41.3
C	42.7	39.0
SE	40.4	30.1
N	37.9	36.2

	1974	1979
F	34.0%	35.6%
M	41.9	36.7
N	37.9	36.2

	1974	1979
W	40.7%	38.6%
B	19.9	21.4
N	37.9	36.2

EXHIBIT 3–5 *(Continued).* Group Changes in Percentages of "Grape Peeler" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979



	1974	1979
PHS	45.0%	41.3%
GHS	35.2	32.3
NGH	26.4	28.1
N	37.9	36.2

	1974	1979
12	44.6%	40.4%
11	39.4	36.2
10	26.3	32.4
N	37.9	36.2

	1974	1979
AU	45.5%	37.2%
R	40.5	36.7
DU	24.7	29.0
N	37.9	36.2

---

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

elaborate repetition of silly or cumbersome phrases or words having to do with bananas and grapes.

Whatever else one might say about the writers of the humorous papers, they at least appeared to have enjoyed the task.

b. Persuasive Writing

Expressive writing trains students in such skills as controlling point of view, role playing, elaborating and inventing. Persuasive writing trains them to be responsive to their audiences and to use a host of strategies to present ideas and influence readers' views. Needless to say, good persuasive writing is often expressive, as well; humorous writing—particularly satire—can be very persuasive. So the skills required for expressive and persuasive writing often overlap each other and also overlap skills involved in explanatory discourse.

In the 1974 and 1979 assessments, 17-year-olds were asked to respond to the following persuasive task:

> *Some high school students have proposed converting an old house into a recreation center where young people might drop in evenings for talk and relaxation. Some local residents oppose the plan on the grounds that the center would depress property values in the neighborhood and attract undesirable types. A public hearing has been called. Write a brief speech that you would make supporting or opposing the plan. Remember to take only ONE point of view. Organize your arguments carefully and be as convincing as possible. Space is provided below and on the next three pages.*

There are many means by which the writers might attempt to sway this audience. They could appeal to general truths, to experience or to social values. They could marshall evidence about other such centers in an effort to be scientific, or they could attempt to appeal to the sympathies of the audience and the fact that they were once teenagers themselves. Good writers will recognize the need to anticipate and defuse objections—in other words, they will attend to both sides of the issue, but state a clear preference for their view. Accordingly, the scoring guide was as follows (complete text appears in Appendix A):

1 = *Do not define and defend a point of view.* Some of these papers have not explicitly or implicitly taken a position. Others may contain a thesis statement or clearly imply a position but do not give supporting reasons to develop their arguments.

2 = *Define a point of view and offer minimal defense.* These papers explicitly state or strongly imply a position and give one or more clusters of arguments or appeals, but they do not develop a line of argument or link the clusters to each other.

3 = *Define and defend a point of view.* These papers clearly state or imply a position and present at least one substantially developed line of argument or two moderately developed lines of argument relevant to the issues at hand.

4 = *Systematically define and defend a point of view.* These papers present at least two moderately developed lines of argument, one which supports the position and one which answers the possible arguments raised by the opposition. The lines of argument usually will be linked as well as carefully organized.

Table 3-4 displays the results:

TABLE 3-4. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Rec Center" Exercise 1974, 1979†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rateable	Not Persuasive	Minimally Persuasive	Persuasive	Fully Persuasive	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1974 (n = 2,308)	2.7%	19.3%	56.6%	20.4%	1.0%	78.0%	21.4%
1979 (n = 2,784)	2.1	25.2	57.5	14.5	0.6	72.7	15.2
Change 1974-79	-0.5	5.8*	0.9	-5.9*	-0.3	-5.3*	-6.2*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

A fifth of the students were rated competent (3 or 4) the first time, and the proportion dropped to about one in seven the second time. It is still true that, if marginally competent papers (those rated 2) are included, almost three-fourths of the students performed the task at some level. But the jump from marginal to solid or better papers is a big one. Outstanding papers, according to the criteria used, were virtually nonexistent.

As usual, some groups fared better than others (Appendix C, Table C-4, and Exhibits 3-6 and 3-7). Females and students from homes with a post-high-school educated parent turned in more 3 and 4 papers. As they did in the previous exercises, blacks closed the gap between their group and national performance from 13 to 9 points by holding their own while the nation declined.

c. Explanatory Writing

It is often necessary to write memos or letters to straighten out messy situations either in a personal or a business context. In addition to their other tasks, 17-year-olds were asked to imagine they were in such a situation and had to write their way out. The assignment asked students to pretend that they had ordered an electric blanket from The Big Mart Company, had received word that it was temporarily out of stock and had subsequently received monthly bills for the blanket and then a letter demanding payment of this past-due account. They were to answer the letter, explaining the situation and the fact that they had not yet sent the money because they had not yet received the blanket.

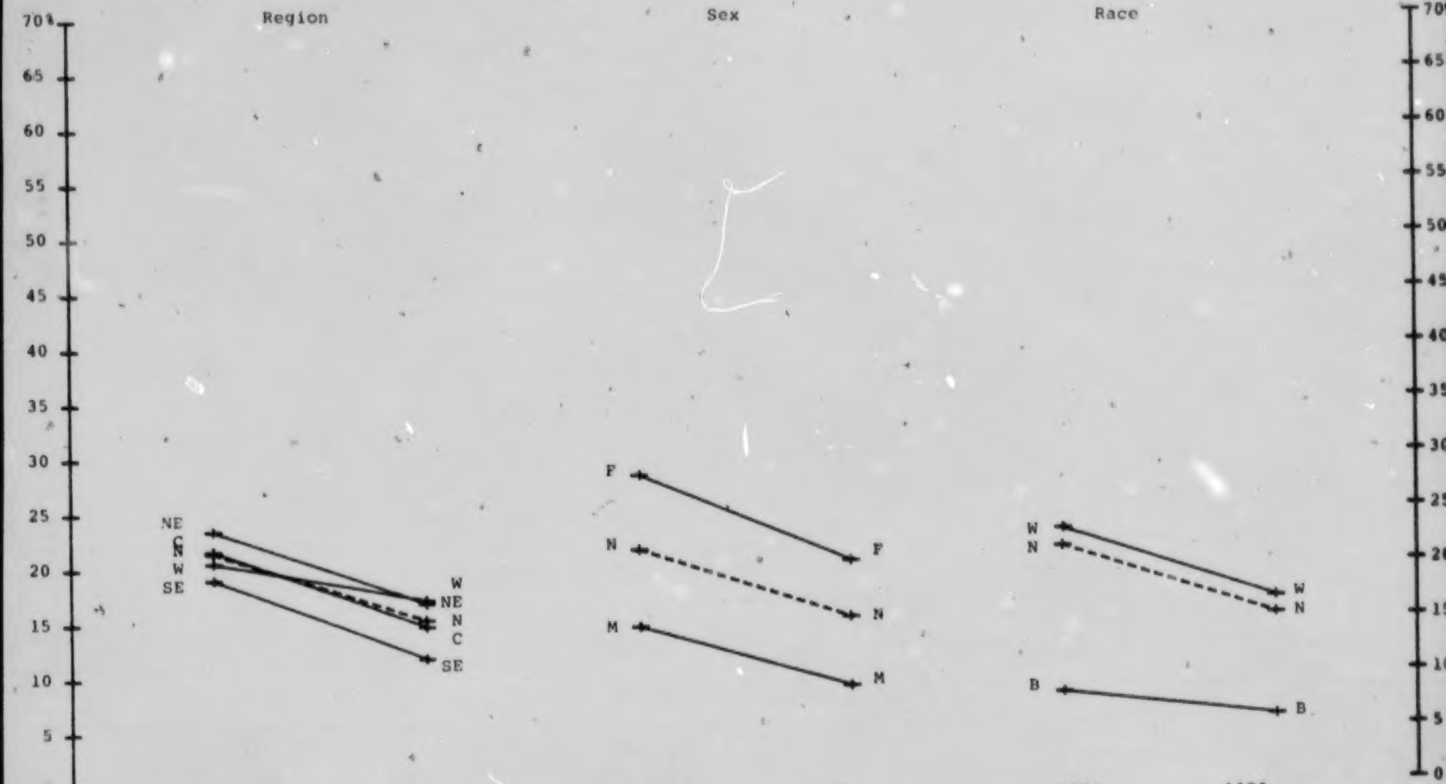
The scoring approach was straightforward: students must clearly explain the situation and include all appropriate information in order to accomplish their purpose. A most successful letter (score of 4) would contain the account number, the date and receipt of the bill and letter, a clear statement of the situation, clear directions for future action and any other information that might increase the chance that Big Mart will solve the problem. The writer would, of course, be identified, and the letter would follow general business letter style.

A successful letter (score of 3) could contain the basic information mentioned above but nothing extra.

A marginal letter (score of 2)—which may or may not be effective—may mention the letter and product and imply that something should be done, but it is somewhat vague and weak.

Inadequate letters (score of 1) are incomplete in

EXHIBIT 3–6. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rec Center" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

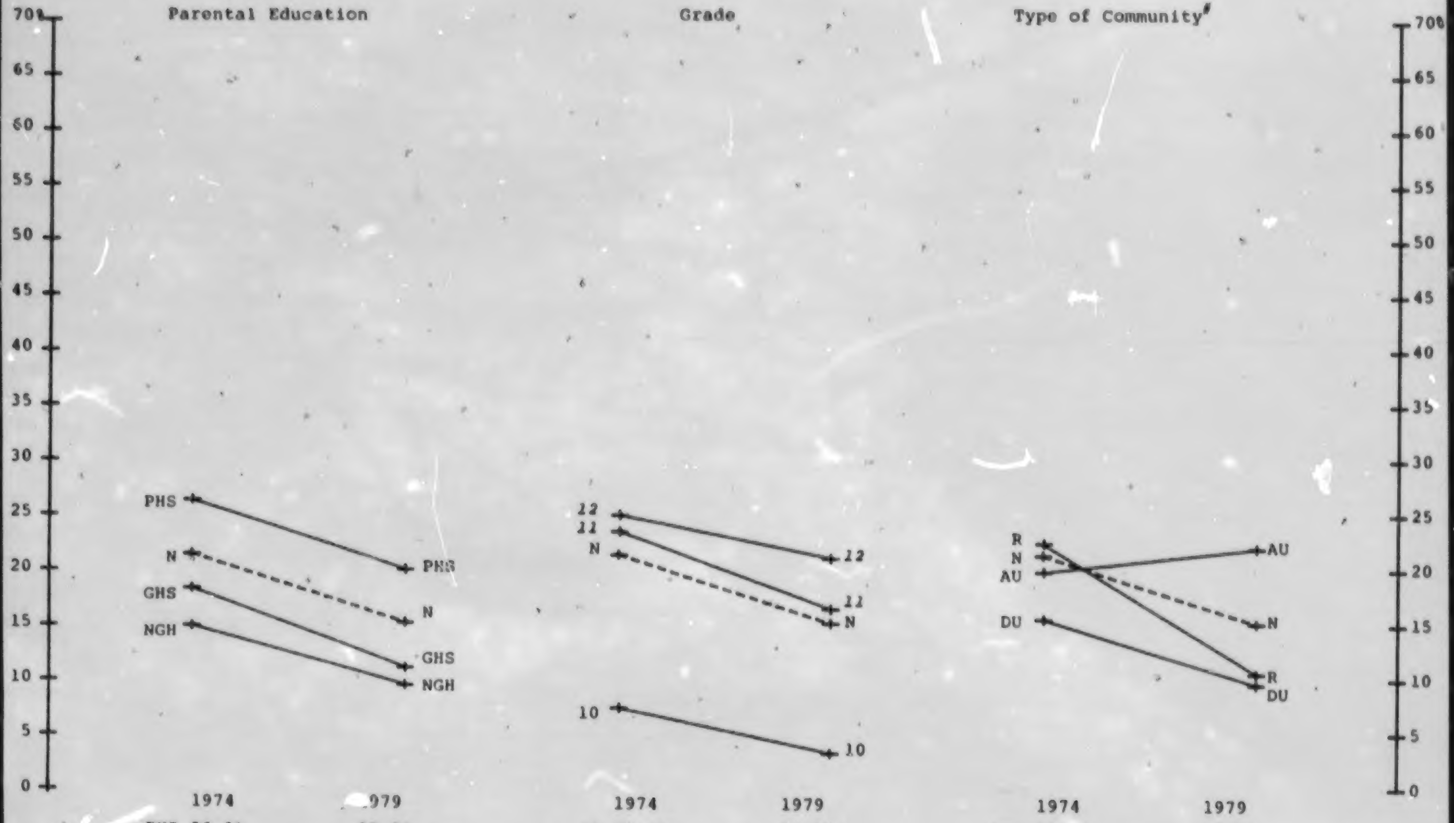


	1974	1979
NE	23.4%	16.7%
W	20.5	17.0
C	21.6	14.6
SE	19.0	11.7
N	21.4	15.2

	1974	1979
F	28.2%	20.3%
M	14.4	8.9
N	21.4	15.2

	1974	1979
W	23.0%	16.7%
B	8.1	5.9
N	21.4	15.2

EXHIBIT 3–6 *(Continued).* Group Changes in Percentages of "Rec Center" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979



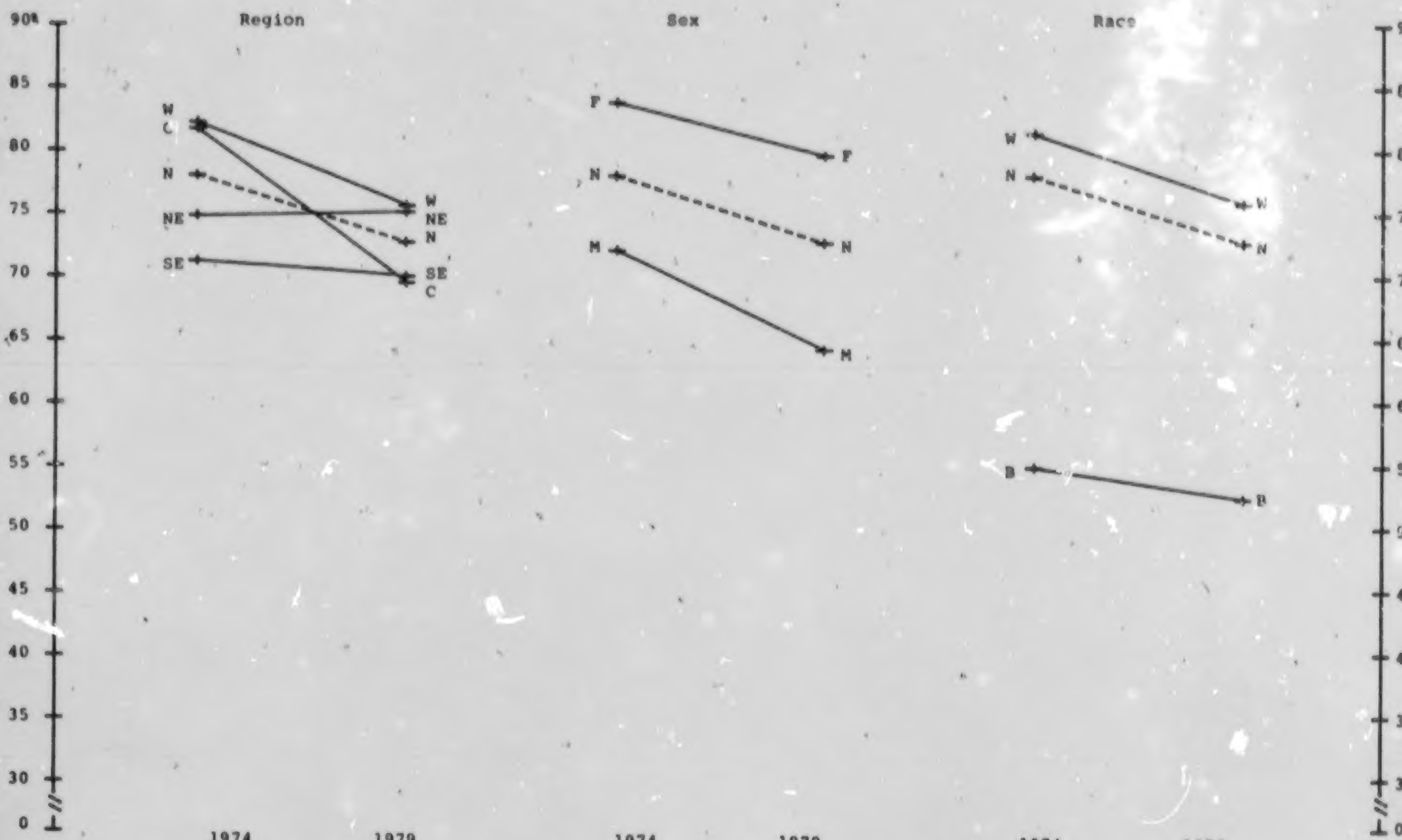
	1974	1979
PHS	26.3%	20.0%
GHS	18.3	11.1
NGH	14.9	9.5
N	21.4	15.2

	1974	1979
12	25.0%	21.1%
11	23.5	16.5
10	7.4	3.3
N	21.4	15.2

	1974	1979
AU	19.9%	22.0%
R	22.5	10.6
DU	15.6	9.6
N	21.4	15.2

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–7. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rec Center" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

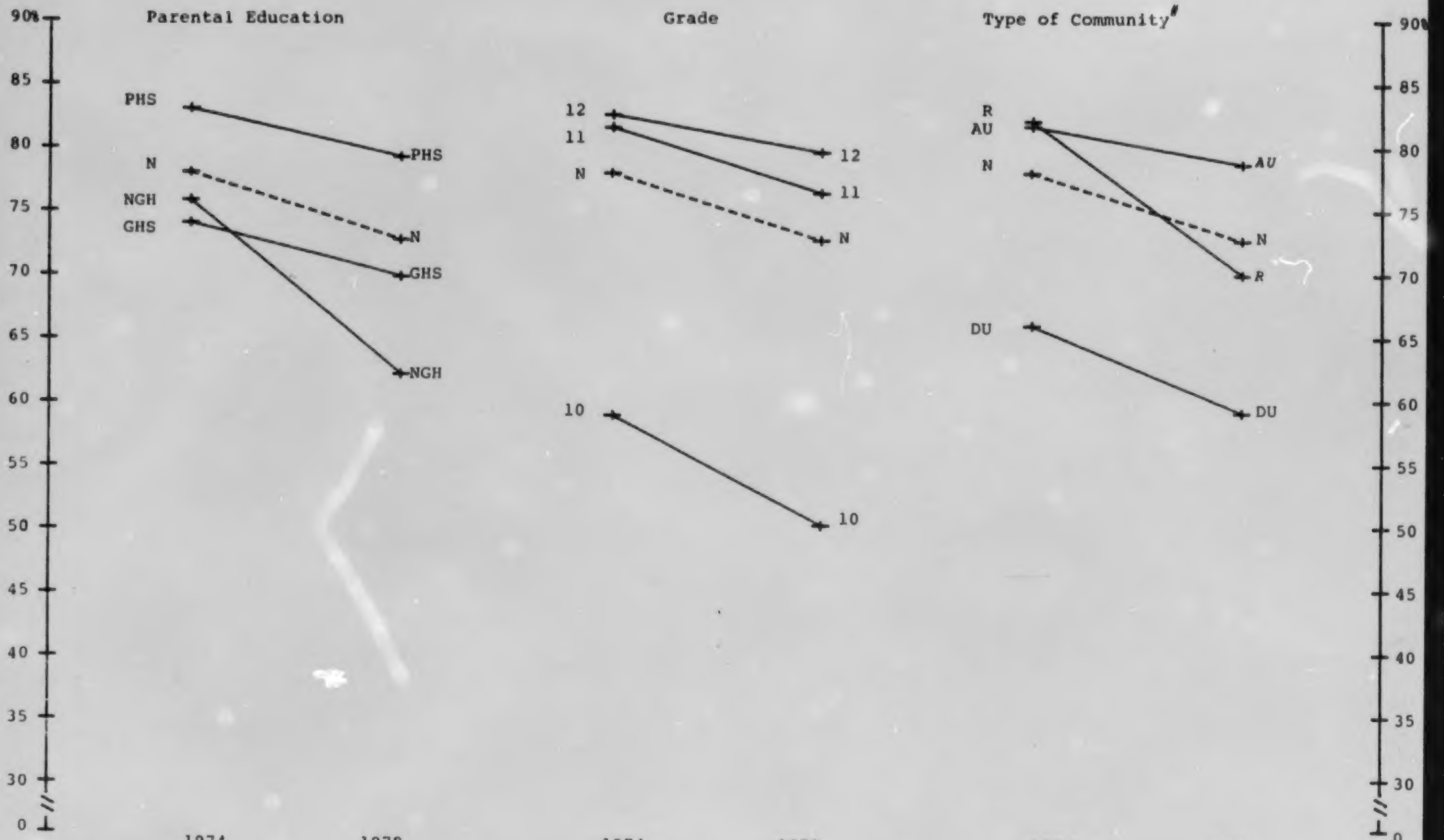


	1974	1979
NE	74.8%	75.1%
W	82.2	75.6
C	81.7	69.5
SE	71.2	70.0
N	78.0	72.7

	1974	1979
F	83.8%	79.6%
M	72.1	64.2
N	78.0	72.7

	1974	1979
W	81.4%	75.8%
B	54.9	52.4
N	78.0	72.7

EXHIBIT 3–7 *(Continued)*. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rec Center" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979



	1974	1979		1974	1979		1974	1979
PHS	83.0%	79.2%	12	82.6%	79.6%	AU	81.7%	78.7%
GHS	74.0	69.8	11	81.6	76.4	R	82.1	70.0
NGH	75.8	62.1	10	58.9	50.2	DU	66.0	59.1
N	78.0	72.7	N	78.0	72.7	N	78.0	72.7

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

one or more crucial respects. The situation is not fully explained, the writer is not identified or a directive is not given.

Table 3-5 displays the results:

TABLE 3-5. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Electric Blanket" Exercise, 1974, 1979†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rate-able 0	Inade-quate 1	Mar-ginal 2	Suc-cess-ful 3	Excel-lent 4	Margin-al or Better 2, 3 & 4	Compe-tent or Better 3 & 4
1974 (n = 2,276)	1.2%	31.3%	21.0%	43.9%	2.6%	67.5%	46.5%
1979 (n = 2,781)	1.5	33.3	18.4	44.8	1.9	65.1	46.7
Change 1974-1979	0.4	2.0	-2.6*	0.9	-0.7	-2.4	0.2

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

Very few teenagers wrote ideal letters, which is not surprising under the circumstances. Slightly fewer than half wrote successful letters, however, and if one adds in the marginal letters, the proportion rises to two-thirds. There was no appreciable change in these proportions between assessments. Table 3-6 provides more detail on the 1979 letters.

TABLE 3-6. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds Providing Various Kinds of Information in "Electric Blanket" Exercise, 1979

Gave name only	68.0%
Gave name and address	3.9
Gave account number	14.7
Mentioned receipt of bill	66.2
Mentioned date of bill	8.4
Denied receiving blanket	92.9
Left future action to Big Mart	24.9
Clearly proposed future action	69.4
Mentioned initial order	32.6
Stated date of original order	34.4
Offered copy of original order	0.3
Mentioned back order letter	22.0
Stated date of back order letter	36.8
Offered copy of back order letter	3.4
Mentioned repeated billing	12.9
Stated number of bills received	27.2
Mentioned efforts to stop repeated billing	0.4

These figures suggest that there were two major weak spots. First, the more specific information—dates and account numbers—was missing in most of the letters. And second, very few teenagers thought to offer copies of important documents. This was, of course, an assessment exercise, not a real world situation. But these weak spots suggest that it might be wise to alert teenagers to the special importance of details and copies in business letters such as this one.

The vast majority of the 2, 3 and 4 letters were businesslike. About 1 in 11 was outwardly hostile, threatening to call the Better Business Bureau or to sue Big Mart for damages. A handful were witty, amusing or even farcical.

Exhibits 3-8 and 3-9 display group results, while Table C-5 in Appendix C presents the group differences at all score levels. Several points stand out. First, although there was no apparent national decline between assessments (on 3 and 4 combined), there was a 12-point improvement for the Western group. Second, while females wrote more successful papers than males in both assessments, their advantage increased from 6% in 1974 to 14% in 1979. On 2, 3 and 4 combined, their advantage rose from 11% to 19%. Third, blacks, as a group, did not show the relative improvement on this exercise they have shown on the previous ones.

B. What Are the Characteristics of the Papers? Descriptions of Cohesion, Syntax and Mechanics

In addition to being judged for overall (holistic) and rhetorical (PTS) quality, some of the papers written by 17-year-olds have been exhaustively examined in an effort to create a detailed picture of the kind of writing NAEP collects. Some of the cohesion, syntax and mechanics features described here undoubtedly relate to the quality of the papers; some do not. All of them help us to understand the nature of this kind of writing, the complex interrelationships of various writing skills and the stability or instability over time of specific essential linguistic constructions.

1. Cohesion

Cohesive ties are the devices writers use to link ideas and give their narratives coherence. There are many kinds of cohesive ties and strategies. Some primary kinds—lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, substitution and ellipsis—are illustrated in Appendix A.

In addition to using these devices, a writer can try to achieve coherence by using rhythm, repetition, story frames, retrospective, summing-up and other such strategies to bind parts of the narrative and guide the reader. Scorers were trained to recognize all these approaches and then asked to categorize the "Stork" papers—the same ones scored for primary trait—using the following scoring guide:

Cohesion Scoring Guide Categories

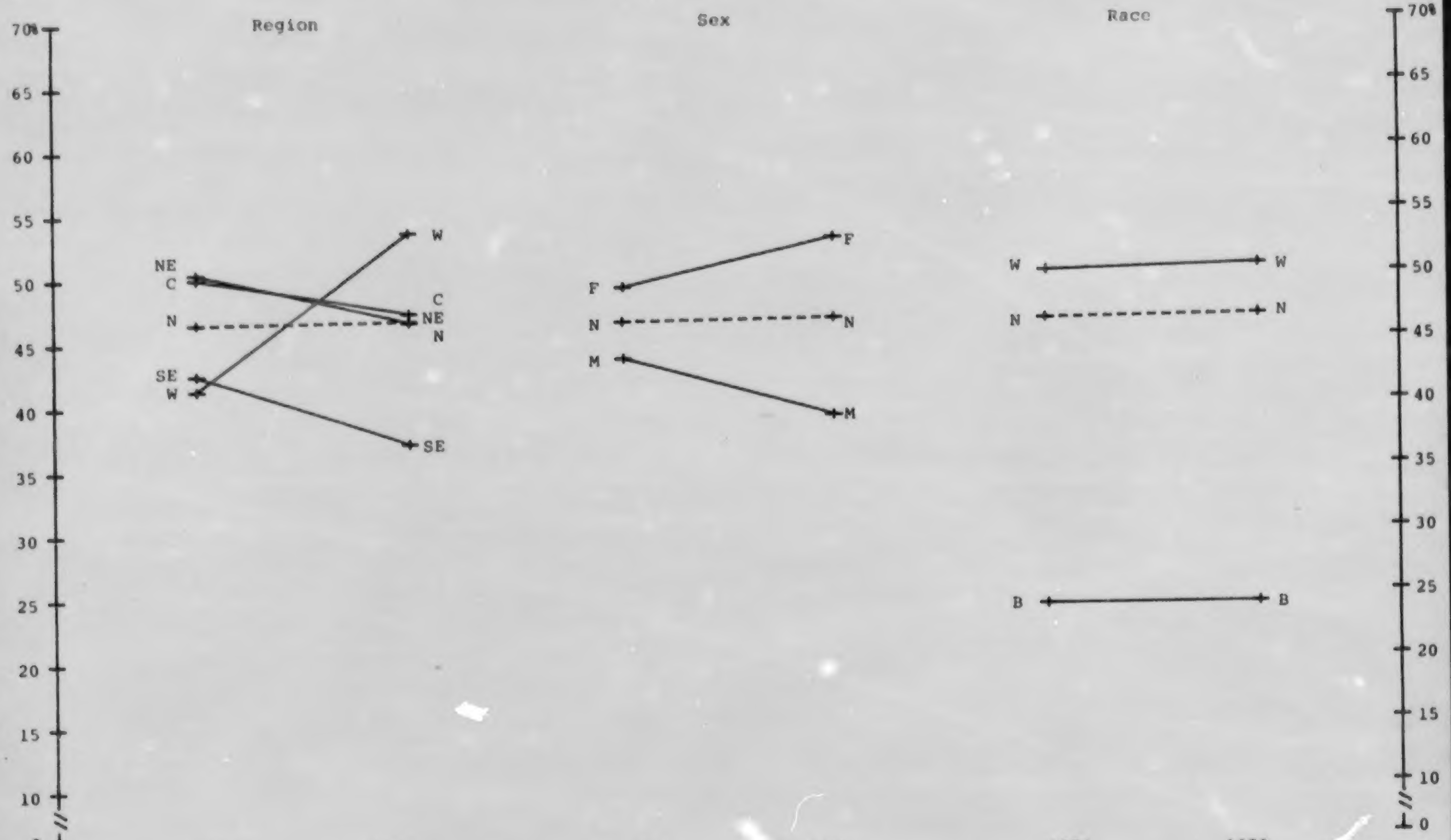
1 = *Little or no evidence of cohesion:* clauses and sentences are not connected beyond pairings.

2 = *Attempts at cohesion:* evidence of gathering details but little or no evidence that these details are meaningfully ordered. Very little would seem lost if the details were rearranged.

3 = *Cohesion:* details are both gathered and ordered. Cohesion does not necessarily lead to coherence, to the successful binding of parts so that the sense of the whole discourse is greater than the sense of its parts. In pieces of writing that are cohesive rather than coherent, there are large sections of details that cohere but these sections stand apart as sections.

4 = *Coherence:* while there may be a sense of sections within the piece of writing, the sheer number and variety of cohesion strategies bind the details and sections into a wholeness. This sense of wholeness can be achieved by a saturation of syntactic repetition throughout the piece and/or by closure that retrospectively orders the entire piece and/or by general statements that organize the whole piece.

EXHIBIT 3–8. Group Changes in Percentages of "Electric Blanket" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

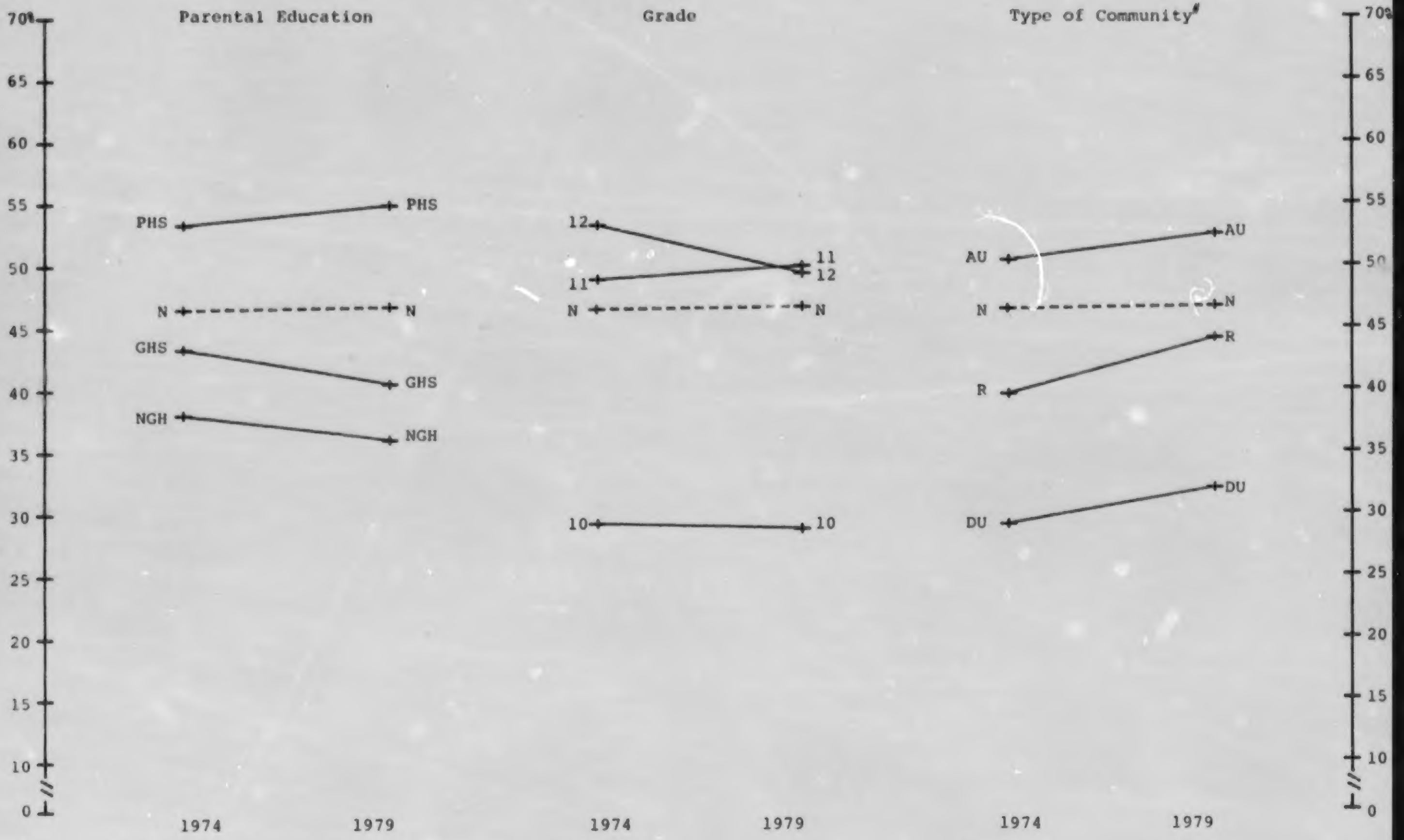


	1974	1979
NE	50.4%	46.6%
W	41.3	53.6
C	50.0	47.3
SE	42.5	37.1
N	46.5	46.7

	1974	1979
F	49.2%	53.0%
M	43.6	39.1
N	46.5	46.7

	1974	1979
W	50.2%	50.6%
B	24.1	24.1
N	46.5	46.7

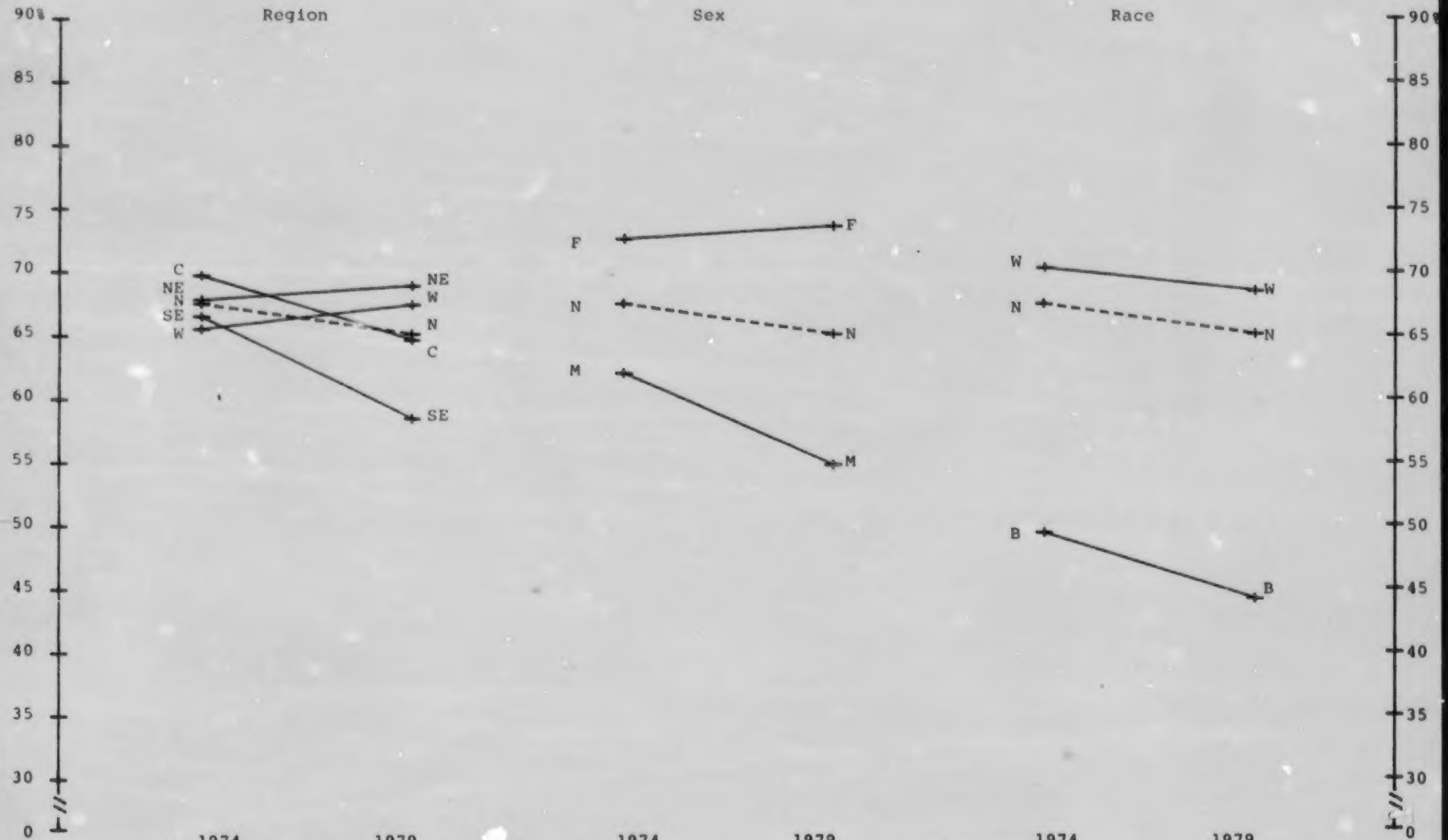
EXHIBIT 3–8 *(Continued)*. Group Changes in Percentages of "Electric Blanket" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979



	1974	1979		1974	1979		1974	1979
PHS	53.3%	54.9%	12	53.3%	49.4%	AU	50.4%	52.5%
GHS	43.3	40.5	11	48.9	50.0	R	39.6	44.1
NGH	38.0	36.0	10	29.2	28.8	DU	29.1	32.0
N	46.5	46.7	N	46.5	46.7	N	46.5	46.7

[#] These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–9. Group Changes in Percentages of "Electric Blanket" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979

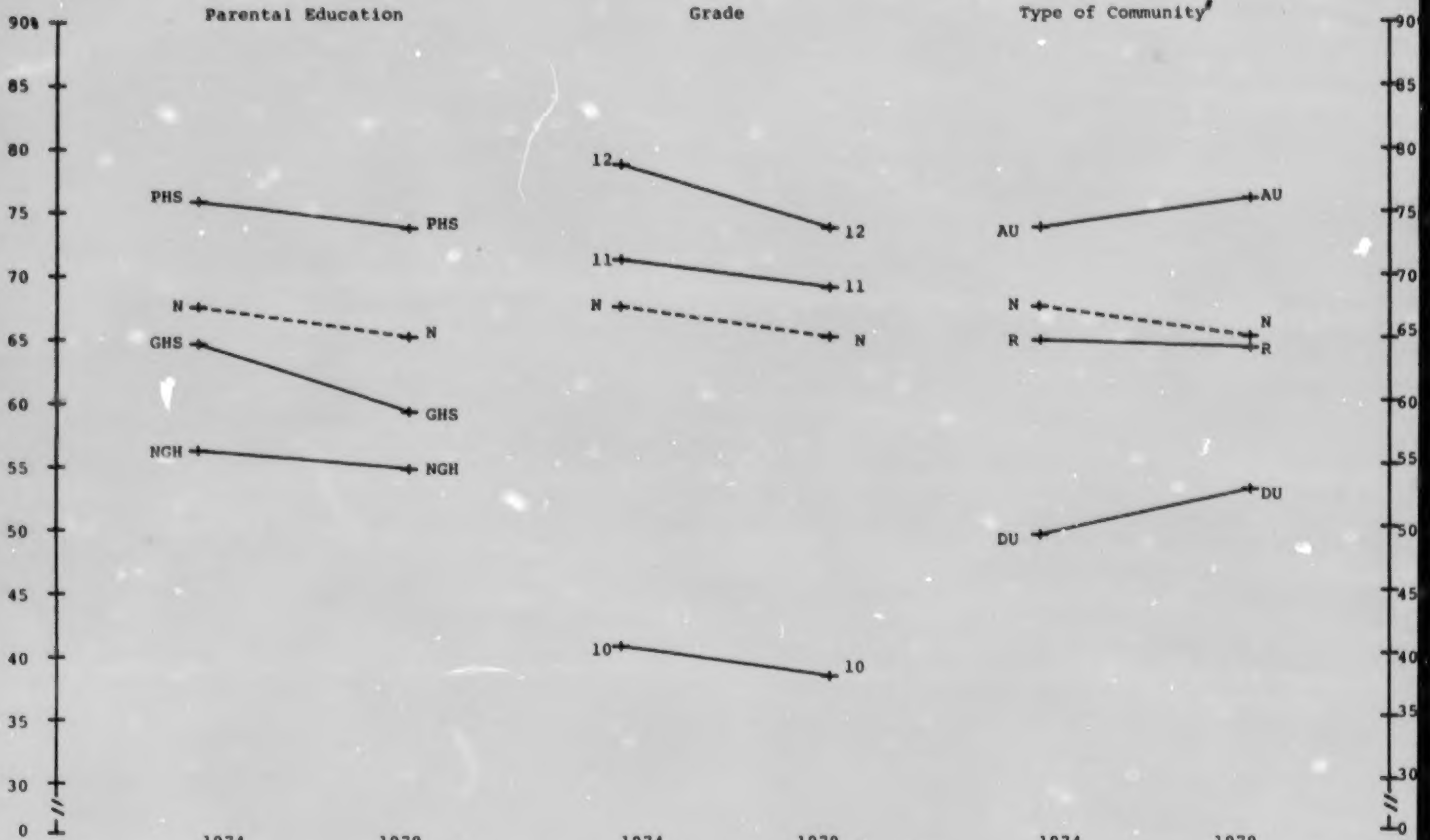


Region	1974	1979
NE	67.8%	68.9%
W	65.5	67.4
C	69.7	64.6
SE	66.5	58.4
N	67.5	65.1

Sex	1974	1979
F	72.6%	73.6%
M	62.0	54.8
N	67.5	65.1

Race	1974	1979
W	70.3%	68.5%
B	49.4	44.2
N	67.5	65.1

EXHIBIT 3–9 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Electric Blanket" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 17, 1974 to 1979**



	1974	1979		1974	1979		1974	1979
PHS	75.8%	73.7%	12	78.7%	73.7%	AU	73.7%	76.0%
GHS	64.6	59.2	11	71.2	69.0	R	64.8	64.2
NGH	56.2	54.7	10	40.7	38.3	DU	49.4	53.0
N	67.5	65.1	N	67.5	65.1	N	67.5	65.1

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

As Table 3-7 reveals, in 1979 most 17-year-olds (71%) achieved level 3 cohesion, and a sizable percentage (16%) wrote papers categorized as 4s. The percentage of combined 3 and 4 papers has risen from 80% in 1969 to 86% in 1979. Results for 2, 3 and 4 combined are not presented because level 2 papers are not really cohesive.

TABLE 3-7. Percentages of 17-Year-Olds at Each Cohesion Score Level, "Stork" Exercise, 1969, 1974, 1979†

Year	Score Point Non-rateable 0	Inadequate 1	Attempts at Cohesion 2	Cohesion 3	Cohesion and Coherence 4	Cohesion or Better 3 & 4
1969 (n = 2,073)	1.0%	0.8%	17.8%	67.2%	13.2%	80.4%
1974 (n = 2,281)	1.5	0.6	19.7	64.1	14.1	78.2
1979 (n = 2,748)	0.9	0.6	12.1	70.9	15.5	86.4
Change						
1969-74	0.5	-0.2	1.9	-3.1	0.9	-2.2
1974-79	-0.6	0.0	-7.7*	6.8*	1.4	8.2*
1969-79	-0.1	-0.2	-5.7*	3.7	2.3	6.0*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

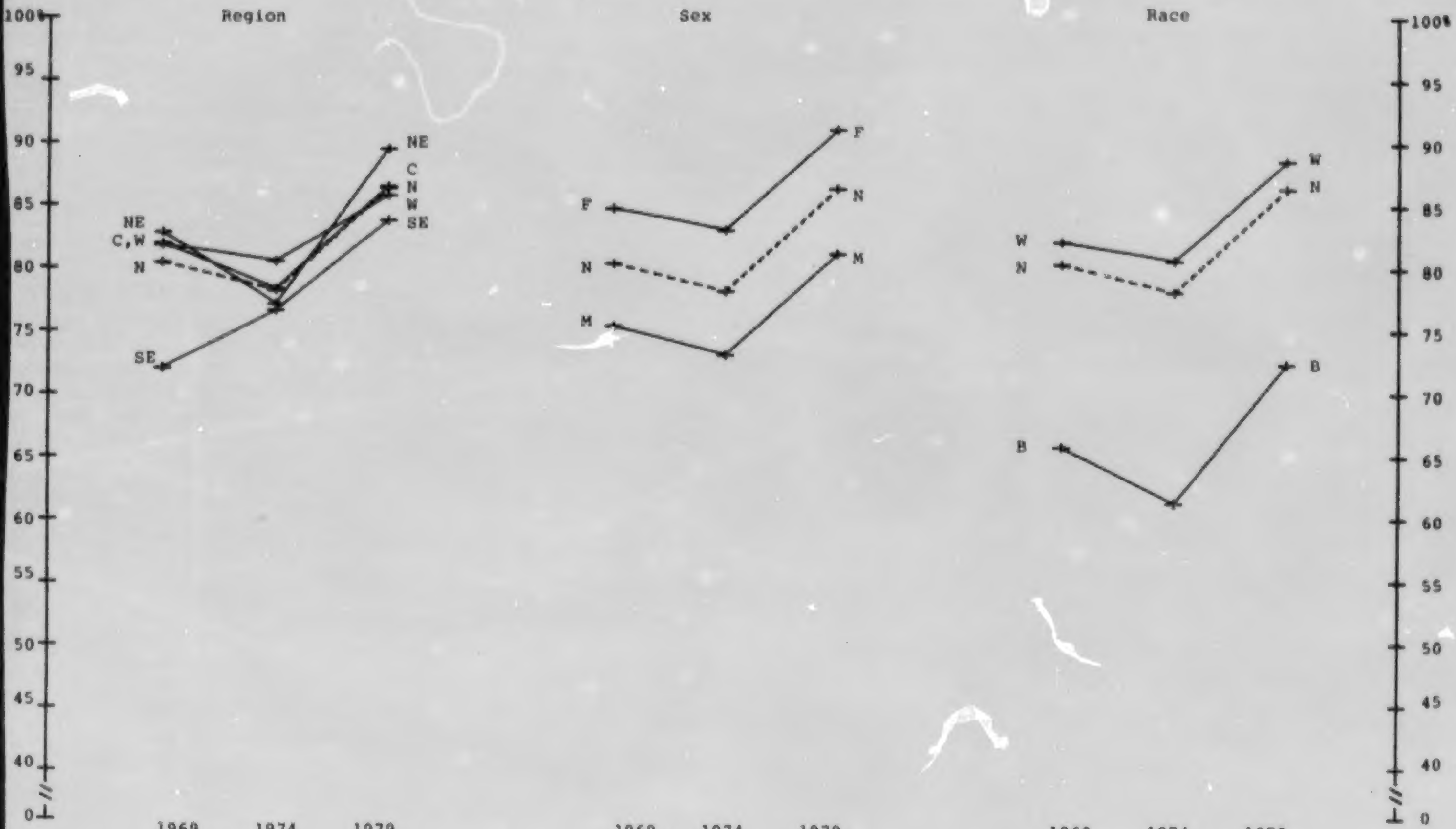
Group differences from the national percentage appear in Appendix C, Table C-2; group results vis-a-vis the nation appear in Exhibit 3-10. Again, females outperformed males, but their advantage (10 points) was not as great as it was with respect to rhetorical skills (17-20 points) on this narrative writing task.

The percentage of level 3 and 4 papers written by black teenagers was about 14 points lower than the national percentage in both 1969 and 1979. Even though black young people did improve as much as the nation, the stability of this difference contrasts to the relative improvement blacks made on the primary trait measure, where they improved twice as much as the nation. Rhetorical effectiveness and cohesion are, of course, different aspects of writing. We might speculate that the 1979 papers contained more elaboration and more fleshing out of the narrative skeleton (raising the primary trait scores) but that the number and patterning of cohesive ties remained much the same. Cohesion may be more difficult to change, instructionally, than rhetorical effectiveness. The latter could be improved by giving greater attention to following directions, controlling point of view and using more details; the former requires a thorough program with considerable writing, diagnosis, modeling and as much attention to the deep structure as to the surface features of student writing.

A similar situation exists for the disadvantaged-urban writers, who improved dramatically on rhetorical skill between 1969 and 1979 but remained at about the same performance level in cohesion, effectively falling somewhat farther behind the nation (primarily in category 4). Apparently there have been improvements in the writing of inner-city 17-year-olds, but not across-the-board. Their control of cohesive ties has remained at the same level for 10 years.

Rural students also lost ground relative to the

EXHIBIT 3–10. Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Cohesion, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979

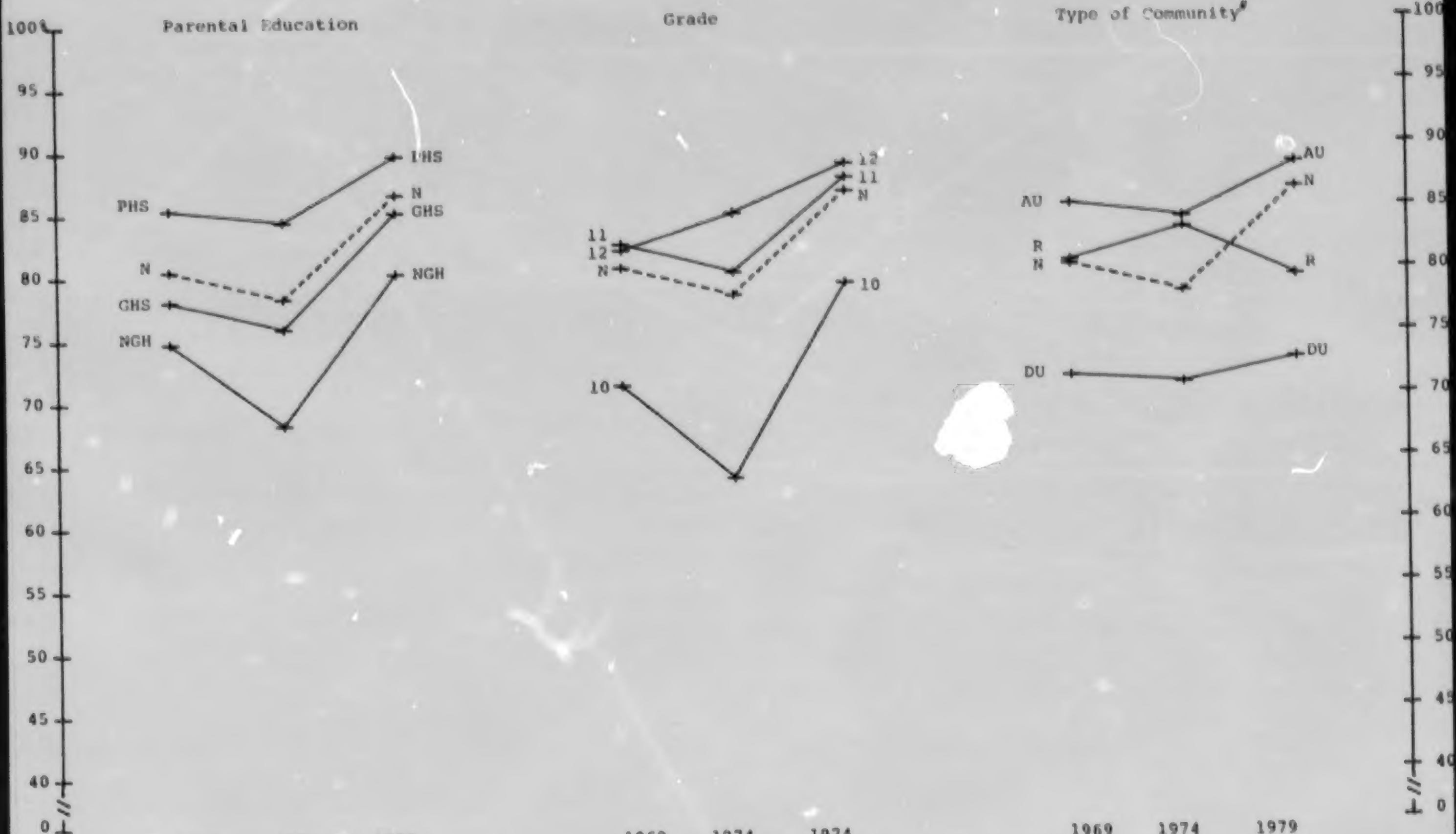


	1969	1974	1979
NE	82.8%	77.1%	89.5%
W	81.8	80.5	85.8
C	81.9	78.3	86.5
SE	72.0	76.6	83.8
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

	1969	1974	1979
F	84.8%	83.1%	91.1%
M	75.4	73.1	81.2
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

	1969	1974	1979
W	82.2%	80.7%	88.6%
B	65.8	61.3	72.4
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

EXHIBIT 3–10 *(Continued)*. **Group Changes in Percentages of "Stork" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Cohesion, Age 17, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1979**



	1969	1974	1979
PHS	85.3%	84.3%	89.5%
GHS	78.0	75.8	85.0
NGH	74.7	68.1	80.1
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

	1969	1974	1974
12	81.8%	84.7%	88.6%
11	82.3	80.0	87.5
10	71.0	63.6	79.1
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

	1969	1974	1979
AU	85.2%	84.1%	88.4%
R	80.7	83.3	79.4
DU	71.5	70.9	72.8
N	80.4	78.2	86.4

[#] *These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.*

nation by writing about the same percentage of 3 and 4 cohesion papers in each assessment, dropping from the national level in 1969 and 1974 to 7 points below it in 1979.

To gain additional information about changes in coherence, the "Describe" papers were subjected to a different, but related analysis. Following an older, less rigorous procedure, readers categorized paragraphs as coherent and incoherent (guidelines appear in Appendix A). Table 3-8 displays the results of this process for poor papers (rated 1 or 2 on the holistic scale) and good papers (rated 3 or 4). The table reveals several things.

TABLE 3-8. Average Percentages of Coherent Paragraphs, Good and Poor "Describe" Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

	1969 (n = 365)	1974 (n = 417)	1979 (n = 538)	Change 1969-74	Change 1974-79	Change 1969-79
Nation	85.4%	77.5%	86.2%	-7.9%*	8.7%*	0.8%
Poor (1 & 2)	80.9	72.6	84.8	-8.3	12.2*	3.9
Good (3 & 4)	90.2	82.4	88.2	-7.7*	5.8*	-2.0

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

First, between 1969 and 1974, there was an 8-point decline in the percentage of coherent paragraphs, paralleling the decline noted for the "Stork" narrative. The decline was uniform for both good and poor writers.

Second, there was an increase in the proportion of coherent paragraphs between 1974 and 1979, again paralleling the increase on the "Stork" narratives. But this increase was not uniform. Rather, it was twice as great among the poor papers as among the good papers. This greater improvement among the poorer writers is what has brought them apparent parity with good writers, making coherence a less potent quality discriminator.

Third, in both 1969 and 1974, there was a significant difference between good and poor papers in terms of their proportions of coherent paragraphs. By 1979, however, the difference seems to have disappeared.

2. Syntax

Both the descriptive essay and the "Stork" narrative exercise were examined to see if there were any changes over the 10 years in the number and types of sentences in the papers. Table 3-9 displays these results. The "Stork" papers show a general shortening of the essay length between 1969 and 1974, followed by a rise in 1979 that returns it to its original average length. Sentence length stayed the same in 1969 and 1974, increasing by an average of one word in 1979. The descriptive papers increased slightly in total length, but the sentences were somewhat shorter in each successive assessment. Word length remained stable at an average of four letters per word for both tasks.

Apparently, little changed over the decade in the proportions of simple, compound and complex sentences, except for a slight decrease in the proportion of simple sentences per "Stork" paper. Today's average narrative is composed of slightly more simple than complex sentences (43%

TABLE 3-9. Means and Percentiles for Characteristics of Narrative and Descriptive Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

	1969					1974					1979					Mean Change
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	1969-79
								Narrative ("Stork")								
# sentences/essay	11	6	9	14	19	10	6	10	13	16	11	7	10	13	18	-0.4
# words/essay	152	88	139	191	232	137	88	130	176	211	149	100	146	184	22[illegible]	-2.6
Avg. # words/sentence	13	9	11	15	20	13	9	11	15	20	14	10	12	16	21	0.2
Avg. # letters/word	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0.0
% minor sentences	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	2	0	0	0	8	0.8*
% simple sentences	46	32	45	60	71	44	29	44	58	71	43	30	44	58	69	-3.1*
% compound sentences	8	0	5	12	21	8	0	0	14	20	8	0	6	12	20	0.4
% complex sentences	38	22	36	50	67	36	22	33	50	63	38	22	33	50	62	0.1
% simple sentences with phrases	13	0	10	21	30	13	0	11	21	33	13	0	11	20	29	-0.1
% complex sentences with phrases	16	0	11	23	38	14	0	11	22	33	15	0	11	22	33	-0.5
Number of respondents			594					596					722			
								Descriptive ("Describe")								
# sentences/essay	9	6	9	11	14	10	5	8	13	16	10	6	8	12	16	0.7
# words/essay	137	101	135	166	198	139	80	125	182	243	140	87	128	178	245	3.2
Avg. # words/sentence	17	13	15	19	23	16	12	14	18	22	16	12	14	18	22	-1.3*
Avg. # letters/word	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	-0.1*
% minor sentences	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.2
% simple sentences	48	29	50	67	82	48	31	50	67	80	47	30	50	65	77	-1.0
% compound sentences	6	0	0	9	15	6	0	0	9	20	7	0	0	12	20	1.3
% complex sentences	35	18	33	50	64	31	14	29	43	58	33	17	33	50	60	-1.8
% simple sentences with phrases	40	23	40	58	71	38	22	38	51	67	38	24	38	50	67	-2.3
% complex sentences with phrases	31	12	27	44	62	26	9	23	38	50	29	14	25	42	54	-2.0
Number of respondents			365					417					538			

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

to 38%), as well as a small proportion of compound sentences and minor sentences (correctly used fragments). The descriptive papers show a *greater ratio of simple to complex* sentences (47% to 33%) and a much greater percentage of sentences with phrases. The relatively larger percentage of minor sentences in the narrative is probably due to the use of dialogue. The remainder of the sentences in both papers (about 7 to 10%) are run-on sentences and fragments. These, along with other errors such as awkwardness, spelling and word choice, are discussed shortly under mechanics. The figures discussed here cannot tell us much about quality. Rather, they are useful for displaying the great range and variety in the papers and the relative stability of such distributions and proportions across time and mode of discourse.

Table 3-10 uses terms that are perhaps less familiar to general readers. Most research on syntax or sentence forms is done in terms of the "T-unit" instead of the sentence, in order to examine the amount and kind of modification and embellishment writers use. Subordination skills—the processes by which writers embed information in their sentences—have been shown to develop in writers as they mature, enabling older and better writers to convey more information more efficiently. Syntax analysts use the T-unit—an independent clause and all its modifying words, phrases and clauses—because it enables them to focus upon embedding more precisely than the sentence. This approach takes into account subordination and coordination between words, phrases and subordinate clauses. It does not take into account coordination between main clauses—the tendency to string T-units together rather than embed information. The table tells us that, in 1979, the average narrative paper contained almost 14 T-units—that is, 14 separate subject-verb constructions or statements. This is close to the number of sentences (11), but indicates that some of the sentences were compound or run-ons (strings of independent clauses).

The first point to note from Table 3-10 is that the average number of words per T-unit, the average number of words per clause and the embedding ratios—all indicators of syntactic maturity—have not changed over the decade. The second point is that the average subordination and intra-T-unit coordination (about 2) tells us that in each T-unit two pieces of information that were not part of the basic (kernel) subject-verb predication were embedded. *This was primarily done* through subordination. There are two ways to look at the subordination: in terms of the units used (clauses, phrases or words) and in terms of the way those units function (as nouns, adjectives or adverbs). The functions were primarily adjectival. As the table indicates in 1979, there were very few nominalizations (.3) and even fewer adverbial modifications (.1), compared with adjectival constructions (1.3). The subordination units were about evenly spread among subordinate clauses (.5), phrases (.4) and words—mainly adjectives—(.8).

These numbers will mean more to linguists than to the general reader. The important lessons to be drawn from Table 3-10 are these:

- These syntactic features of the NAEP papers have remained stable over 10 years, indicating that there have been no major changes in the amount of embedding the teenagers do in their writing;

- The average paper is rather perfunctory, linking subjects, verbs and objects without much modification or elaboration.

An extensive report on the full syntactic analysis of these papers will appear at a later date.

3. Mechanics

As this report illustrates, the consultants who helped design the national writing assessments do not believe mechanics and error counts are the only or the most important aspects of writing that should be evaluated. Errors may be indicators of unlearned skills, but they may also be indicators of growth. By themselves, errors do not tell us much; in the context of a particular paper, a particular pattern and a particular student, they have great diagnostic value. The error counts displayed in this report are being used in a purely descriptive way. We are less interested in the counts per se than in the patterns they suggest and the changes they undergo over the years.

TABLE 3-10. Means and Percentiles for Number of T-Units and T-Unit Constituents, Narrative Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

	1969					1974					1979					
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean Change 1969-7
# T-units/essay	13.5	8.0	12.0	17.0	23.0	12.8	8.0	12.0	16.0	20.0	13.6	9.0	13.0	17.0	21.0	-0.27
Avg. # words/T-unit	11.4	9.4	11.0	13.0	15.3	11.1	9.2	10.7	12.6	14.7	11.4	9.2	10.8	12.8	14.9	-0.01
Avg. # subordinations (embedding)/T-unit	1.7	1.1	1.5	2.1	2.7	1.6	1.1	1.5	2.0	2.6	1.7	1.1	1.5	2.1	2.6	0.04
Avg. # subordinate clauses/T-unit	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.01
Avg. # words/clause	7.4	6.4	7.1	8.0	9.2	7.2	6.3	7.0	7.9	9.1	7.3	6.4	7.0	7.9	9.0	-0.09
Avg. # nominalizations/T-unit	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.01
Avg. # adjectival (noun) modifications/T-unit	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.1	1.2	0.7	1.1	1.6	2.1	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.2	0.05
Avg. # relative clauses/T-unit	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.02
Avg. # adjectives/T-unit	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.02
Avg. # adverbial modifications/T-unit	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	-0.03*
Avg. # intra-T-unit coordinations/T-unit	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.03*
Avg. # subordinations and intra-T-unit coordinations/T-unit	1.9	1.2	1.8	2.3	2.9	1.8	1.2	1.7	2.3	3.0	2.0	1.3	1.7	2.3	3.0	0.07
Number of respondents			594					596					722			

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

†Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 3-11 presents average error counts for a narrative task (the "Stork" papers discussed earlier) and a descriptive task (the "Describe" papers discussed earlier). The most obvious pattern in the table is that most of the numbers increase between the first and second assessments and then decrease or level off between the second and third. Regardless of the statistical significance of any particular change between 1974 and 1979, it is noteworthy that so many of the changes are decreases. Whatever it was that increased the general error rate between 1969-74, it disappeared or gave way to something else that decreased the error rate and brought matters back to about where they were 10 years ago. This movement, although not as dramatic, mirrors the movements noted earlier for rhetorical skill and cohesion.

A second point emerging from the table is that once the dive between the first two assessments is accounted for, little seems to have changed over the 10-year period. There do seem to be very slight increases in sentence fragments and run-ons. A third observation is that 15% of the sentences in the narrative and 19% of those in the descriptive essay were judged awkward. When awkward sentences were further analyzed for the narrative, it appeared that most of them were a result of carelessness—leaving a word out, rewriting a word and the like. These were called "dysfunctional" constructions.

A fourth point is that the error counts differ somewhat from task to task. The descriptive papers contained proportionally more awkward sentences, agreement errors and misspellings per paper. It is difficult to say why this would be so, but it could be related to the differences in discourse mode or to how comfortable the writers felt with each writing task. The narrative papers contained more punctuation errors, a fact largely accounted for by the requirements of dialogue. For both papers, the bulk of punctuation errors were errors of omission, primarily of commas.

Table 3-12 displays the numbers and percentages of errors for the first quartile of students (25% are above that point, 75% below), the median (50% above, 50% below), the third quartile and the 90% level (the most error prone 10% of the students). Notice that the writing of the top 25% of the students is virtually error free. The top 50% of the papers were also largely error-free, though they averaged about one awkward sentence, misspelled a couple of words and contained about four punctuation errors. The bottom 25% of the papers contain far more errors, and the bottom 10% display severe writing problems. Writing skills—at least in terms of error counts—do not seem to distribute themselves smoothly over a "bell shaped" curve. Rather, they are distributed in heavily skewed shapes that suggest two very difference populations of people. One of those populations—the majority—appears to have a general, though imperfect, grasp of written language. The other population appears to be virtually lost.

Tables D-1 and D-2 in Appendix D display error counts for good and poor writers (defined by holistic, primary trait and cohesion ratings); Table D-3 shows error counts for males, females, blacks and whites. Poor writers created two to three times as many run-ons, twice as many awkward sentences and agreement errors and somewhat more word-choice errors and misspellings as did good writers. Males tended to make more mechanical errors in most categories than did females, and their error rate between 1969 and 1979 appears to have increased slightly. Blacks, too, made more errors than the national population. Of particular linguistic interest is the observation that black young people made four times as many agreement errors as whites, a probable sign of bidialectal interference in their writing.

A final note on mechanics: Looking back over the tables, one is struck with the basic stability of the numbers over a 10-year period. To be sure, many of them did shift between assessments, but not greatly. This suggests two things: first, that a certain percentage of error will always be with us as a stable feature of writing, especially first-draft writing; and second, that small changes in that percentage may well have disproportionately powerful effects upon readers' perceptions of writing quality.

TABLE 3-11. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Narrative and Descriptive Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

	1969		1974		1979		Change 1969-74		Change 1974-79		Change 1969-79	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Narrative ("Stork")												
Sentence fragments	0.1	0.8	0.2	1.7	0.2	1.6	0.1*	0.9*	0.0	-0.1	0.1*	0.8*
Run-on sentences	0.3	3.4	0.3	5.7	0.4	4.7	0.1	2.2*	0.0	-0.9	0.1*	1.3*
Awkward sentences	1.4	14.1	1.4	15.4	1.3	14.6	0.0	1.3	-0.1	-0.8	-0.1	0.5
Faulty parallelism	0.2	2.2	0.3	3.4	0.2	2.1	0.1*	1.2*	-0.1	-1.2*	0.0	0.0
Unclear pronoun reference	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	-0.1*	-0.5*	0.0	-0.2
Illogical constructions	0.2	3.0	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.4	-0.1*	-1.3*	0.0	-0.3	-0.1*	-1.6*
Other dysfunctional constructions	0.9	8.4	0.9	9.5	0.9	10.7	0.0	1.1	0.1	1.2	0.0	2.4*
Capitalization errors	0.6	---	0.7	---	0.6	---	0.1	---	-0.1	---	0.1	---
Misspelled words	2.8	1.9	2.7	2.3	3.4	2.4	0.0	0.3	0.6*	0.1	0.6	0.5*
Word-choice errors	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.2*	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	2.3	0.2	2.6	0.2	2.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0
Total punctuation errors	6.0	---	6.4	---	6.2	---	0.4	---	-0.2	---	0.2	---
Comma errors	3.4	---	3.7	---	3.6	---	0.3	---	0.0	---	0.2	---
Endmark errors	0.4	3.9	0.4	4.9	0.5	4.9	0.1	1.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.1
Number of respondents	594		596		722							
Descriptive ("Describe")												
Sentence fragments	0.4	4.2	0.4	5.0	0.3	4.1	0.1	0.7	-0.1	-0.8	0.0	-0.1
Run-on sentences	0.4	6.6	0.6	10.0	0.6	8.4	0.2*	3.4*	-0.1	-1.6	0.1	1.9
Awkward sentences	1.3	16.1	1.4	17.8	1.5	19.4	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.3	3.2
Capitalization errors	0.3	---	0.6	---	0.8	---	0.3*	---	0.1	---	0.5*	---
Misspelled words	3.1	2.5	3.5	3.0	4.1	3.5	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.9
Word-choice errors	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.5	-0.1	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.5	6.8	0.6	8.7	0.7	8.5	0.1	1.9	0.0	-0.2	0.2*	1.6
Total punctuation errors	2.5	---	2.8	---	3.2	---	0.3	---	0.4	---	0.7	---
Comma errors	2.1	---	2.1	---	2.5	---	0.0	---	0.4	---	0.4	---
Endmark errors	0.3	4.5	0.4	5.5	0.4	5.6	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.1
Number of respondents	365		417		538							

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE 3-12. Means and Percentiles for Errors in Narrative and Descriptive Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

			1969					1974					1979			Mean
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Chang 1969-
								Narrative ("Stork")								
% sentence fragments	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	2	0	0	0	8	0.8*
% run-on sentences	3	0	0	0	17	6	0	0	6	20	5	0	0	6	17	1.3*
% awkward sentences	14	0	12	25	40	15	0	11	25	40	15	0	11	23	40	0.5
# capitalization errors	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	0.1
% misspelled words	2	0	1	3	5	2	1	2	4	6	2	1	2	3	6	0.5*
% word-choice errors	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	2	0.1
% sentences with agreement errors	2	0	0	0	9	3	0	0	0	11	2	0	0	0	11	0.0
# total punctuation errors	6	2	4	8	13	6	2	5	8	15	6	3	5	8	13	0.2
Number of respondents			594					596					722			
								Descriptive ("Describe")								
% sentence fragments	4	0	0	0	14	5	0	0	6	20	4	0	0	0	14	-0.1
% run-on sentences	7	0	0	10	25	10	0	0	11	38	7	0	0	12	33	1.9
% awkward sentences	16	0	11	25	43	18	0	13	25	43	19	0	15	29	50	3.2
# capitalization errors	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	0.5*
% misspelled words	3	1	2	3	6	3	1	2	4	7	3	1	2	5	8	0.9
% word-choice errors	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	-0.1
% sentences with agreement errors	7	0	0	11	25	9	0	0	12	29	8	0	0	13	25	1.6
# total punctuation errors	2	1	2	4	5	3	1	2	4	6	3	1	3	4	7	0.7
Number of respondents			365					417					538			

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
†Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

C. Writing Experiences and Attitudes

Besides actually writing, the 17-year-olds also answered a number of questions about how much writing they do, what kinds of instruction they have had and how they feel about writing. The questions appear in Appendix E. The results (Table 3-13 and appendix Tables E-1, E-2 and E-3) prompt a number of observations:

- In both 1974 and 1979, substantial proportions of 17-year-olds reported that they are assigned little or no writing in school. More than half said they had written three or fewer papers in all their courses combined over a six-week period. The good writers (primarily trait scores of 3 or 4) appear to have written considerably more papers than the poor writers.
- In 1974, 47% reported that little or no time was spent on writing instruction in their English classes. This percentage shrank to 37% in 1979, as the percentages of students replying one-third to one-half time rose. It appears then, that somewhat more writing instruction is taking place in English classes than used to be.
- About a fourth of the students reported that they had taken additional writing courses—mainly creative writing—beyond their regular English class requirements. These students appeared to be mostly the better writers.
- Few students (8%) said they took remedial writing courses—far fewer than the data in this report would suggest need intensive instruction.
- Two-thirds of the students reported that at least some of the time they are encouraged to engage in prewriting activities.
- About half the students said that they usually write a paper more than once before turning it in. The poor writers were far more likely than the good writers to say they turned in first-draft work.
- About half the students said they usually receive teacher feedback on their papers; far fewer (27%) said they usually discuss their papers with their teachers.
- Forty percent said they never rework a paper to improve it once it has been returned; another 46% said they do so sometimes. Only 13% said they do so usually.
- Poor writers, males, students whose parents have not graduated from high school, disadvantaged-urban students, blacks and 17-year-olds in grade 10 appeared to be far less likely to be prewriting, writing multiple drafts or receiving teacher feedback than good writers.
- Only 7% of the students said they engage in the full writing process—from prewriting activities through improving work after teacher feedback.
- One-fourth of the students said they never enjoy working on writing assignments; another 55% said they only enjoyed working on writing assignments sometimes.

When interpreting these results, one should keep in mind the fact that poor writers are caught in a revolving door of cause and effect; they are poor writers, so they seldom write; and, because they seldom write, they are poor writers. Most of them are likely to be in classes requiring little writing. Good writers are more likely to be engaged in positive writing activities because they are more likely to be writing in the first place.

TABLE 3-13. Responses to Background Questions, Age 17, 1974, 1979†

	1974 (n = 34,211)	1979 (n = 26,651)	Change 1974-79
1. How many reports written in last 6 weeks as part of any school assignment?			
0	13.0%	13.9%	0.9%
1	11.4	12.3	1.0
2	16.3	16.8	0.4
3	14.7	14.0	-0.6
4	11.2	11.1	-0.1
5-10	25.7	22.5	-3.2
More than 10	6.2	5.3	-0.9
2. Time spent in English class on instruction in writing?			
None of the time	5.0	3.7	-1.3*
Little of the time	41.6	33.7*	-8.0*
1/3 of the time	33.6	31.7*	3.5*
1/2 of the time	13.8	17.4*	3.6*
Most of the time	5.8	6.9	1.1
3. A. Taken additional remedial writing course?			
Yes	6.3	8.2	1.9*
B. Taken additional creative writing course?			
Yes	20.5	24.6	4.1*
C. Taken other additional writing course?			
Yes	14.9	16.6	1.6
Total have taken at least one additional course other than remedial	26.1	24.0	-2.1
4. Encouraged to jot down ideas and take notes before writing?			
Usually		54.4	
Sometimes		35.1	
Never		7.7	
5. Encouraged to create outlines?			
Usually		49.4	
Sometimes		35.5	
Never		11.2	
Encouraged to prewrite: notes or outlines or both		66.0	
Neither notes nor outlines		31.2	
Either notes or outlines		28.3	
Both notes and outlines		37.7	

TABLE 3-13 *Continue* Responses to Background Questions, Age 17, 1974, 1979 †

	1974 (n = 34,211)	1979 (n = 26,651)	Change 1974-79
6. Do you draft papers more than once before turning in?			
Usually	53.9	56.3	2.4
Sometimes	40.1	35.9	-4.2*
Never	5.9	7.8	1.8*
7. Does teacher write suggestions on paper?			
Usually	33.1	48.0	14.9*
Sometimes	56.5	44.2	-12.2*
Never	10.4	7.7	-2.7*
8. Does teacher discuss papers with you?			
Usually		27.0	
Sometimes		57.1	
Never		15.8	
Teacher feedback: written suggestions or discussion or both		57.9	
Neither written suggestions nor discussion		42.1	
Either written suggestions or discussion		40.4	
Both written suggestions and discussion		17.5	
9. Do you work to improve papers after they are returned?			
Usually		13.4	
Sometimes		46.2	
Never		40.3	
10. Do you enjoy working on writing assignments?			
Usually		20.6	
Sometimes		55.3	
Never		24.1	
Summary of writing as a process: Prewrite, draft, feedback, improve			
None		10.4	
At least one		89.5	
At least two		67.0	
At least three		34.2	
All four		6.7	

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

The 17-year-olds were also asked to respond to 12 attitude questions (Appendix E). Given a statement such as "I am no good at writing," they could strongly agree, agree, say they were uncertain, disagree or strongly disagree. In general, the proportion of students agreeing to positively worded statements about writing (e.g., "I like to write down my ideas") ranged from 4 to 6 in 10? the proportion agreeing to negatively worded statements ranged from 1 to 3 in 10. This would indicate that in an average classroom, around half to three-fifths of the teenagers (give or take a few) are likely to have positive attitudes about themselves as writers and about a fifth to a quarter of them are likely to have negative attitudes. The rest are uncertain.

Full results of the attitude questions appear in appendix Table E-3.

Some highlights:

- Twelve percent agreed to the statement that "expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time."
- Twelve percent agreed to the statement "when I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly."
- Twenty-one percent said they avoid writing.
- Twenty-two percent agreed to the statement "I am no good at writing."
- Fifty-three percent agreed to the statement "I enjoy writing."
- Forty-six percent agreed to the statement "I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing."

These results suggest that a considerable proportion of young people about to leave high school consider themselves poor writers, are apprehensive about writing or are uncertain about their level of skill. One of the most telling results of all was the response to the statement "People seem to enjoy what I write." More than 70% of the students were either uncertain or flatly disagreed. It appears that work aimed at improving students' writing skills will have to go hand in hand with work aimed at improving their attitudes.

CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING OF 9-YEAR-OLDS, 13-YEAR-OLDS AND 17-YEAR-OLDS

This volume presents writing assessment results for a single age group; parallel results for the other two age groups appear in the other two volumes of the report. However, in order to put the results in this volume into perspective, it is useful to look at general results for all three ages.

On holistic ratings, the 17-year-olds do not show a statistically significant change over the decade for a descriptive task. There are some signs, however, that the average quality of their writing is somewhat lower than it was. The 13-year-olds display a significant decline in descriptive writing, though it appears that much of it took place between the first two assessments and the quality has stayed about the same since then. The 9-year-olds do not show a statistically significant change on a narrative task, but there are indications that the overall quality of their work has improved with each assessment. These holistic results suggest two things. First, since changes in overall writing quality are basically undramatic for any particular age group, realizing changes in such a complex skill may be a slow process. It may take many more assessments to establish the impact of educational instruction on writing performance. Second, what one says about the situation of writing in America depends upon which level of the educational system one is interested in. The differing trends in the data suggest that primary school, junior high school and high school constitute somewhat separate targets for policy action in the area of writing. Generalizations from one age to another appear to be inappropriate.

The results for writing tasks calling for different types of rhetorical or communicative approaches provide further cause for caution in making global comments about writing. At ages 17 and 13, expressive writing skills are improving or remaining at the same level, while persuasive and descriptive writing skills appear to be declining. At age 9, there have been ups and downs in expressive writing, depending on the task, but persuasive writing skills appear stable.

Error analysis does not reveal many major changes in the commission of certain errors over a decade's time at any age. Awkwardness seems to fluctuate a bit from assessment to assessment, as do punctuation and spelling errors. But the rate of fluctuation seems small and the data suggest that at each age there will always be errors in writing of this kind. Even more stable than the error proportions are the results of syntactic analysis. The embedding rates and various indices of subordination and coordination remained identical or very similar at ages 13 and 17 from assessment to assessment. This is largely so at age 9, but some indicators do reflect a bit of growth over the decade.

Although all three age groups did not perform the same writing tasks, it is clear that more 13-year-olds demonstrated writing skill than 9-year-olds and more 17-year-olds did than 13-year-olds. There is progress from age to age and from grade to grade.

On the other hand, enjoyment of writing seems to decline from age to age. Two-thirds of the 9-year-olds said they enjoy writing, compared to 59% of the 13-year-olds and 53% of the 17-year-olds.

Group results and changes in them were quite consistent across the three ages. Females wrote more good papers than males in all assessments at each age and for all but one task. The male/female difference did not change appreciably for any age group.

Black youngsters improved either absolutely or relatively on almost all writing tasks given to 13- and 17-year-olds and one task given to 9-year-olds. In some cases this meant that they continued to perform below the national level, but not as far below as they had been in 1969 or 1970; in other cases, this meant that they performed at the national level after once having been below it.

At age 17, the disadvantaged-urban group made steady gains over the decade. At age 13, the group stayed below the national level or fell even farther behind. Nine-year-olds in the disadvantaged-urban group closed the gap between themselves and the nation on one expressive writing task but remained at a constant level below the nation on the rest.

At all three ages, it appears that a considerable proportion of young people—from 10 to 25%—do not understand the nature and conventions of written language. In an earlier NAEP report, *Writing Mechanics, 1969-74* (1975), we noted that the gap between the writing "haves" and the "have nots" seemed to be widening. The more comprehensive data available now do not indicate that the gap is widening. They do indicate, however, that it has not closed appreciably at any age.

Finally, it is clear from the background questions that neither 13-year-olds nor 17-year-olds receive a great deal of direct instruction in writing or are required to do much writing in school. Very few appear to have access to a writing program that includes prewriting instruction, oral and written feedback on writing assignments, encouragement to write several drafts of papers and opportunities to rework papers after they have been reviewed by teachers.

CHAPTER 5

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WRITING IN AMERICA, THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS FOR INSTRUCTION

In order to put the assessment findings into perspective and stimulate discussion of the issues they raise, the National Assessment invited five nationally prominent individuals to discuss and interpret the data. Participating in two days of lively conversation about the subject were:

V. Jon Bentz, Director of Psychological Research and Services, National Personnel Department, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Chicago, Illinois. In addition to his interest in writing and assessment from a corporate point of view, Mr. Bentz has been a member of two boards of education and the Policy Committee of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Beverly Bimes, English teacher, Hazelwood Schools, Missouri. Ms. Bimes is a Title I consultant, Gateway Writing Project consultant, Presidential Scholar Commissioner and 1980 National Teacher of the Year.

Charlotte Brooks, writing teacher, author, editor, education consultant and past President of the National Council of Teachers of English.

John Mellon, linguist, author and Chairman of the Program in English Composition. University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

Richard Lloyd-Jones, Chairman, Department of English, University of Iowa; past President of the Conference on College Communication and Composition; Chair, Modern Languages Association Division on the Teaching of Writing; and Associate Director, Iowa-National Endowment for the Humanities Institute on Writing.

All present felt it was important for readers of this report to understand the National Assessment data and the social and educational contexts within which writing instruction takes place before rushing to conclusions about what these results might mean. After establishing this contextual framework, the panel discussed at length the significance of the trends and their implications for teachers of writing. Their opinions are theirs alone and do not necessarily represent either the views of the institutions with which they are affiliated or those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the Education Commission of the States or the National Institute of Education.

Assessment Data in Perspective

All participants wished to emphasize the fact that the writing upon which this report is based was first-draft writing gathered under timed assessment conditions. Such writing is likely to understate youngsters' abilities to develop fully their ideas and smooth out their writing through subsequent drafts.

In addition, some of the assignments are necessarily artificial and may understate the writers' capacities to do a better job in a "real world" or school situation when real stakes are involved.

John Mellon stressed the point that NAEP data are descriptive, not normative. "It's easy to think something's wrong when performance is down," he said, "but it's not necessarily the case. It's really hard to tell what these ups and downs mean until we've got 50 years of them. Then, maybe we'll see that they smooth out to a relatively straight line. In the meantime, I prefer to view the results as descriptions of something complex and, except in extreme cases—or instances when we have other kinds of data to bring to bear—withhold judgment until we have a better idea of what we can reasonably expect the results should be in a society like ours."

Richard Lloyd-Jones speculated about what kinds of changes would most likely affect national indicators such as these data: "Crises in the society as a whole may show up in a sample of writing quickly because they may affect the incentives students feel to perform well in these circumstances. Long-term changes in society may show up less quickly and dramatically in data of this kind. Changes caused by classroom practices would show up slowly, if at all, because the teachers remain essentially the same, the time devoted (or not devoted) to writing remains relatively stable and instructional materials remain much the same for long periods of time. By and large, the most likely causes of changes in assessment data will be large social movements that affect large subgroups of people—such as integration, for instance—rather than curricular or instructional movements, which tend to cancel each other out across the nation as a whole."

The Social Context of Writing

Like many commentators upon contemporary education, the participants in this discussion stressed the degree to which sociocultural factors can influence achievement in a subject such as writing. People perfect their language skills in oral practice, mostly outside of school. Because writing is derived from that base, it tends to reflect whatever is part of general public practice. In addition, if the culture at large seems to accord little importance to writing or to writing well; if professional writing is not generally held in high esteem; or if social upheavals affect opportunities to learn, practice or value any of the many skills involved in writing, then we should not be surprised if achievement appears, sometimes, lower than we think it should be.

Jon Bentz believes that society has been valuing writing less and less in the last two decades. "Everything is computerized, quantified, visual or audio," he said. "Respect for, or even interest in, the written word is on the decline. And the art of conversation, of interchanging thoughts, appears to be passing, or at least changing in character. In our McLuhanesque world, fewer people reason, while more make demands and pronouncements. Television, primarily a passive experience, reduces the need for imagination and interaction, both of which are critical for good writing."

In response to the declines in the proportion of youngsters demonstrating effective persuasive writing, Lloyd-Jones speculated that we might be witnessing a consequence of the "Me" generation. "Persuasive writing requires a highly developed social sense," he said, "an ability to imagine other peoples' needs and priorities in order to address them. Perhaps we're seeing a decline in the proportions of youngsters able to imagine other people or experiences outside of a very narrow range of self interests."

Beverly Bimes added the observation that "if the social experience of argument is weak or shabby, it's hard to see how our students could learn good argument or persuasion."

All agreed that writing is a complex and difficult skill, requiring considerable motivation to learn and numerous good models to learn well. Social changes that affect motivation or the availability of models will affect the number of young people who learn to write well.

Mellon mixed some advice about society's expectations with a speculation about the slight decline in overall quality at age 17 and the larger decline at age 13. "It may be that, as Piaget remarked, Americans are too concerned with the speed at which their children develop," he said. "Perhaps we're seeing a slight slowing down of what we used to think of as the 'normal' developmental schedule. The skills will come eventually, but they're coming a little slower than they used to, that's all. A complex social change could conceivably delay the cognitive or emotional development of a particular generation in some respects, while speeding it up in other respects."

The Educational Context of Writing

The discussants were in general agreement that a number of the characteristics of American mass education and a number of educational trends combine to constitute a less-than-ideal environment for the teaching and learning of writing. Among the features of our educational system that make effective writing instruction difficult, they cited these as prominent:

- Writing requires considerable one-to-one teacher/student and student/student interaction, while our system is geared to instructing large groups. Furthermore, class size continues to grow, not shrink, making individual attention nearly impossible.

- Writing instruction is considered to be the responsibility only of English teachers. Thus, an activity that should pervade instruction in all subjects is relegated to a small part of a student's day and severed from general learning. Furthermore, many teachers deprive students of writing opportunities by giving multiple-choice and short-answer tests and shying away from essays.

- Many people teaching English were trained in other subject areas and know little or nothing about writing.

- Too many people trained to teach English still have had little or no training in composition or writing.

- Many English teachers see themselves as literature teachers, not writing teachers. When they do teach writing, they tend to focus upon the products of writing, rather than the process.

- Writing requires practice, but most teachers feel they do not have the time to read and critique all the papers that would be written if their students were practicing as they should be. Consequently, less writing is assigned than should be.

In addition to these general problems, which have a long history, the discussants also cited several more recent trends in education that do not auger well for writing instruction. Charlotte Brooks criticized a "lock-step" approach to learning that has become increasingly popular with the minimal competency movement and tighter education budgets. "Writing is not something a child can learn a little piece at a time," she said. "So many of these competency programs break reading and writing up into bits: first, you master the alphabet, then you master words, then you can go on to sentences, and so on. The child seldom gets to see the larger picture, seldom gets the freedom to explore with language and take risks."

Bimes said, "I think the basics movement has been detrimental in many ways to writing. Too often, what's basic turns out to be mechanics and grammar, not writing. And expressive writing, which *is* basic, is seen as a frill. We have to remember that a writer has feelings and a writer has a mind. To deny either of those is to deny a student the possibility of becoming a writer at all."

Bentz saw budgetary cutbacks as more threatening to writing than to other subjects. "The cutbacks in my state generally mean the schools lose the paraprofessionals and readers who help writing teachers with their paper load," he said. "They also cut into the conference time teachers need with their students."

All agreed that publishers represent a conservative force in the teaching of writing. It is very difficult to get publishers to incorporate new ideas into their writing textbooks, they argued, because the publishers are afraid to take economic risks in today's tight market. Consequently, major textbooks have not changed for decades, in spite of a virtual explosion of useful research and practical information in the field of writing.

"I think we should remember that a lot of very positive things have been happening in the schools since the late 60s," Brooks reminded the group. "It hasn't been a totally negative period for writing. We've had the Right to Read program, and where it has been done well, it has helped writing, too. I don't like to separate reading and writing, because they feed each other. And we've had the Poets in the Schools Program and the various humanities programs that expose students to writers and scholars. These have been very successful where they've been used. And some schools have begun to follow the example of England with Writing Across the Curriculum programs. I've seen these work in England and they're tremendously impressive."

"We've seen writing labs, too," Bimes added. "And a mushrooming of programs modeled after the Bay Area Writing Project. It may be that these developments are too recent to affect the 1979 writing assessment, but we might see some impact in the next assessment, if they continue to spread and escape cutbacks."

Comments About the National Results

The discussants were asked whether they thought the percentages of competent papers for each exercise and at each age were lower than they would like, higher or about what they might have expected. In general, they felt that the achievement levels were satisfactory, given the social and educational environments of writing in the last decade. They were, however, disappointed with the results for the persuasive writing, especially at ages 13 and 17. And, as might be expected, they felt there was some room for improvement on every exercise.

Lloyd-Jones pointed out that in the papers written for each assessment, there were "some astonishing papers—any reader would be pleased and challenged by them. Even though they write under restraints of limited time, artificial tasks and no external reward," he said, "some writers far exceeded any reasonable expectation."

Most writers, the group felt, produced "reasonably adequate first drafts for their age." The average paper needs revision, they pointed out, and it falls short of effective or powerful writing; but it represents material a teacher ought to be able to help students refine to a perfectly acceptable level. The potential of the majority of writers is obvious.

However, the group was strongly disappointed by the consistent reminders in the data that 10 to 25, and sometimes 30%, of the youngsters at each age have extremely serious problems with writing that call for special attention. Although Lloyd-Jones estimated that half of the students in that group are probably there for reasons other than lack of competence (e.g., physical, psychological and social problems), everyone still felt the proportion of such youngstes is unacceptably high. "It's hard to imagine that one of a child's first instincts is to want to write," Bimes said. "In fact, children attempt to write before they even think about reading. What have we done to this natural desire in our children?"

What did the group think about the trends? No one believed the NAEP data support fears of a massive erosion of writing competence. They all observed that the holistic-scores decline at age 17 was slight—worth keeping an eye on but not sufficient to provoke great concern. They would have preferred to see an increase. They felt the age 13 decline was more dramatic, but they pointed out that most of it occurred between the first two assessments and things seem to have settled down since then. They were gratified to see improvement among the 9-year-olds and expressed hope that this would bode well for the future.

Bimes expressed concern about the low percentage of 17-year-olds who attempted to write a humorous paper. "It appears that students aren't given opportunities to use higher-level cognitive skills in their writing," she said. "Too many writing assignments simply become a way for students to regurgitate information instead of requiring them to generalize, analyze, synthesize, hypothesize or defend."

Comments About the Group Results

Brooks spoke for the entire group in saying, "I am enormously encouraged by the consistent growth demonstrated by black and urban-disadvantaged writers on most exercises. At all levels, it's clear that something has happened to help these youngsters write better. Although many of them have not yet reached a high level of writing competence, they obviously have a potential for improvement that educators, legislators and the public at large must recognize. There is competence where once people said there was none."

It was this improvement, coupled with the improvement of the Southeastern region on many exercises, that led the group to speculate that the assessment results may reflect the impact of a change in the national pattern of attention paid to minority youngsters over the last decade and a half. "Something of that magnitude could well affect large groups such as the blacks, the urban-disadvantaged and the Southeastern youngsters," said Lloyd-Jones. Brooks agreed, noting that "there is no economic improvement in the inner city that I know of that could account for such an improvement."

Some Implications of the Results for Teaching

Responses to the background questions demonstrated to the group that too little writing is going on in the schools and too few students are being exposed to a comprehensive writing program. The fact that so few students appear to receive instruction in prewriting, oral and written feedback from teachers and encouragement to improve papers after they're handed back indicates, they said, that there is much work to be done in the schools.

"I think the results show a clear need for more writing laboratories in the schools," Bimes said. "But they also show a great need for professional development. Teachers need first to see themselves as professionals and then to participate more widely in the various workshops and inservice programs in writing that have begun to appear in the last five years. There's a lot of information out there that's just not reaching the teachers."

"Writing labs, yes," Brooks added, "but not remedial writing courses. I think 'remedial' courses that fragment language have not helped in reading and I'd hate to see us make the same mistake in writing. Too many remedial writing courses just teach grammar and don't give youngsters opportunities to work with whole pieces of writing."

"I'd like to see more emphasis placed on persuasive writing," Bentz said. "To me, that's critical to success outside of school." Brooks agreed: "I'd like to see not only more attention to persuasion, but more attention to complex thinking skills in general. In reading, I'd like to see more emphasis on inference and comprehension, because I think that would improve both reading and writing. They don't need to be taught separately and taught a piece at a time."

Speaking about the grammatical structures used by writers at the three ages, Mellon observed, "The amazing stability of the syntax counts over the 10-year period suggests that grammatical maturity is not affected by those cultural factors influencing other aspects of students' writing. It also means that there is no need to step up the amount of grammar teaching aimed at maturity of grammatical structures."

"The greater length of the 9-year-olds' essays shows a greater willingness to write," Mellon also remarked. "That's encouraging and we should take advantage of it."

"Writing begins with enjoyment," Bimes said. "Until we teach children to enjoy writing we're not going to make the improvements we could otherwise."

"We have a base to build on," Brooks pointed out, "the results show that. The raw material is certainly there, the skills are there for most youngsters. We can no longer assume that any group of kids is 'unteachable.'"

The group made a number of suggestions about classroom approaches that would help more youngsters learn to write. Among them were these:

- Get the 9-year-olds "hooked" on writing by assigning writing suitable to their age and interests. Help them build security and interest through expressive writing and then lead them toward more difficult modes gradually. Let them experience success.
- Build on the fact that all youngsters have a solid grasp of oral language. Use that base as a springboard for writing instruction.
- Have them write. No one can achieve success in a skill that is seldom practiced.

- Structure assignments so that writing becomes discovery instead of regurgitation.

- Establish places where students write freely and receive constructive feedback on what they write.

- Since 13-year-olds appear to have difficulty with abstraction, start them on concrete expression and then move them gradually toward generalizations until they are skilled at making generalizations supported with concrete details.

- Develop persuasive writing skills by developing a sense of audience. Have them practice writing for different audiences.

- Teach skills useful at each stage of the writing process: prewriting, composing and editing.

- Integrate writing into all activities—science, social studies, even mathematics. Writing is an important and very effective way of learning.

APPENDIX A

EXERCISES, DOCUMENTATION, SCORING GUIDES AND SAMPLE PAPERS

Appendix A contains exercises and information about them, such as the NAEP objectives they are designed to assess, the kinds of scoring National Assessment utilized with each one, the amount of time students were given to respond and the number of lines students had on which to write. Following each exercise are any scoring guides used for evaluating the responses, and following the guides are sample papers illustrating each score point.

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"Describe Something" Exercise

Everybody knows of something that is worth talking about. Maybe you know about a famous building like the Empire State Building in New York City or something like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Or you might know a lot about the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City or the new sports stadium in Atlanta or St. Louis. Or you might be familiar with something from nature, like Niagara Falls, a gigantic wheat field, a grove of orange trees, or a part of a wide, muddy river like the Mississippi.

There is probably something you can describe. Choose something you know about. It may be something from around where you live, or something you have seen while traveling, or something you have studied in school. Think about it for a while and then write a description of what it looks like so that it could be recognized by someone who has read your description.

Name what you are describing and try to use your best writing.

WRITING TASK: Describe Something

NAEP #: 0-203012-13A-23

RHETORICAL MODE: Explanatory

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: C. Scholastic

NAEP SCORING: Holistic
Paragraph Coherence
Syntax (Sentence Types) and Mechanics (see Appendix B)

AGE:	13	17
TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS:	1566	1563
NUMBER OF LINES:	p.1 - 4 p.2 - 25 p.3 - 22	p.1 - 4 p.2 - 25 p.3 - 22

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE
"DESCRIBE SOMETHING"
AGE 17

Score Point Categories:

Score of 4

These papers choose a single object and describe it with concrete, clear language. They contain considerable detail and substance, written with a clear sense of structure and originality. There may be a few minor mechanical problems.

Score of 3

These papers usually choose a single subject and describe it clearly, though with less detail, originality, or focus than the 4 papers. A mere listing of details, however, with no clear organization or purpose should ordinarily be scored in the bottom half. The subject should be individualized, an organizing pattern should be evident, and mechanical problems should be relatively minor.

Score of 2

These papers do describe something or someone but tend to be mere lists of details. They are often thin, loosely organized, and clichéd.

Score of 1

These papers tend to be very brief and confused, often with many errors in syntax, diction, and mechanics.

Score of 0

No-response papers should be given to the Table Leader for scoring.

NOTE: An unusually fluent paper may be raised a point for fluency; a distressingly faulty paper may be lowered a point for mechanics.

PARAGRAPH COHERENCE SCORING GUIDE
(Developed for the 1973-74 Writing Assessment)
"DESCRIBE SOMETHING"

Paragraph Level Scores

1. Paragraph Used -- The paragraph is visually discernible but is neither coherent nor developed. The writer indented, skipped a line, or stopped in the middle of the line and started back at the margin.

2. Paragraph Coherent -- The sentences are linked using transitions and/or other cohesive devices. The ideas are ordered and their relationship to each other is clear but the paragraph is in some sense underdeveloped. This category also includes paragraphs that are overdeveloped; that is, the writer incorporated at least two coherent paragraphs into one.

3. Paragraph Coherent and Developed -- The paragraph has an expressed or an implied topic which identifies and limits the main area of concern. Every sentence in the paragraph adds to or explains something about the main topic in a systematic manner.

NOTE: Papers that are illegible, copies of the stem, or lists of spelling words are designated as such and receive no further scoring.

SAMPLES

Holistic

Score Point 1

In ST. Augustine Florida. The oldest city in Florida. Huge Fort were the people long time ago Fought it canyons, rooms and prison. The little town similizing the old city, place were cigars are made. Courthouse, post office, jail and many more. Old grave yard back in the 1800's, musem and the Foundation of Youth discoved by Pounce De Leon.

* * * * *

A large tall building that I've seen In Nashville Tenn. you can go to the top of the building and look over the entire city. This is a very exciting building to see.

I am describing Watkins Glen in New York. It is beautiful to look at, high stone walls, and a stream to fish from. It doesn't have very many trees, just a few bushes. When you walk through it you feel like you're walking in a cave that has no roof. There are tunnels to explore and little animals, like rabbits and things to watch. The stone walls of the Glen are very pretty and very high. The whole Glen is just beautiful.

Score Point 2

I am describing to you what Hawaii looks like. Hawaii has many pineapple and flower orchards. The island is very beautiful with man volcanoes. the weather is nice and warm. the people dress very casualy. Its almost alway sunny and warm out. there are many beautiful trees and places of interest to visit. Hawaii has many very big mountains which you can climb. The standard of living there is very high. Most of the people live in shacks because a house is very very expensive. the ocean water is a very true blue and I have never seen anything like it. the waves are very big and they knock you over the people there are very friendly and if they know that you are from the mainland they become super nice. All in All Hawaii is the most nicest and prettist Island I have ever gone to

Score Point 3

(The Grand Canyon) It is a huge canyon in Arizona that is a hundred feet deep and in some places, a mile wide. It was made by a river that runs through the bottom of it. It is considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Many tourists from different countries come to see this marvel of nature. The canyon is made up of many layers of rock that forms a multicolored pattern through out the canyon. Anyone who goes to see it gets a panoramic view because of its great size.

Many who go to see this often take pictures of it and send them to relatives. Many pictures of this are seen on postcards. It has been made into a park and it costs to get in.

My favorite spot in Oregon is Lost Lake near Mt Hood. It is a very beautiful area with alot of birds & animals. It is a camping sight with a very big lake. There are no motor boats permitted on the lake so it is almost totally unpolluted. The fishing is very good there, but there is no hunting permitted. On a really nice day, when your fishing out in the middle of the lake, there is the most beautiful view of Mt Hood. It's almost like you could reach out & touch it.

If your not the camper type, there is also a lodge up in the main area of the sight that recieves guests that want to stay just a day or two & fish.

There is always so much to do when you go there; hiking, fishing, swimming or just taking a short walk around camp.

I think the best part about Lost Lake, is that its really not too far from Portland, but when you get there you feel like its the only place in the world because its so high up & there isn't always alot of people there. During the vacation season when there are quite a few people there, you still have alot of privacy because your own individual campsite is set back far enough so that no one can really tell if your there.

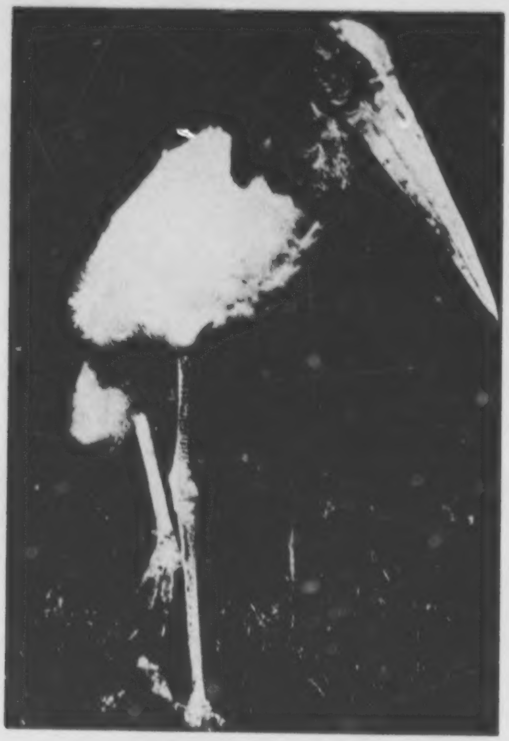
Score Point 4

The kindergarten room at Pine Crest looked as if it had seen a very restless morning. Chairs were tipped over instead of standing erect like they should have been. The tables were splotched with an array of crayon and pencil marks. Bits of paper cluttered the cubbyholes of the tables. Strewn about the room were toys, crayons, pieces of paper, and boxes. The sink was surrounded by a moat of water and soggy paper towels. The counter along the window was covered with scissors, paste, and construction paper. Along one end of the counter a disfigured jack-o-lantern sat peering across the room where six chairs stood in a circle. Each chair was draped with a picture of a painting. The bright colors from the paintings dressed the chairs gayly. Each of the four easels were covered with a kaleidoscope of colors received from great artistic works. Some of the paint was still wet and dripping slowly down the easels. The only sound to be heard was the rhythmic ticking of the clock. Besides that, the room stood still while waiting for her rambunctious tenants to return from lunch

* * * * *

It gleams in the night and sparkles in the daytime. A thousand expressway lights reflect themselves in a pool of metallic white as the body moves speedily down the concrete path. At the slower speeds of the city streets, the two-ton machine moves with all the beauty and grace of a ballet dancer– turning, stopping and starting again at the least command. Its beauty lies in its simplicity. Straight lines and circles compose its elegance. Round headlights illuminate the dusk-laden streets, circular taillights remind the pedestrian of its passing. Sharp angles remind one of a box with a still smaller box alighted on it which comes along for a smooth ride. A rich deep red interior of vinyl seats and plush carpet welcomes one up to the joy of living and makes the passenger forget the dull grays and drab greens of the outside.

This, to me, is my car, a 1965 Ford Custom Sedan



"Stork" Exercise

Look at the picture for a while, and then make up a story about it. When you are ready, write your story. It may be helpful for you to start with one of the following lines, but you may begin in any way you wish.

Possible First Lines

"I'm telling you, Henry, if you don't get rid of that thing, it's going to eat up the cat!"

"But mother, I am telling the truth! It laid an egg in the Chevy."

"Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood."

WRITING TASK: Stork

NAEP #: 0-102016-13A-3

RHETORICAL MODE: Expressive

OBJECTIVE: I. Demonstrates ability in writing to reveal personal feelings and ideas.

SUBOBJECTIVE: B. Through the use of conventional modes of discourse

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Fiction to account for a situation.

Cohesion

Syntax (T-unit Analysis and Sentence Types) and Mechanics (see Appendix B)

AGE: 17

TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS: 1564

NUMBER OF LINES: p.1 - 7
p.2 - 23

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"STORK"

Rhetorical Mode: Expressive

Primary Trait: Fiction to account for a situation.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The exercise calls for the creation of a fictional narrative--"make up a story." The subject, the stork, is given and the three possible first lines, two of which invite dialogue, provide suggestions for situations.

General Scoring Rationale: The techniques of fiction require control of a consistent point of view. Verbal cleverness would be desirable, but this is probably unrealistic for a 25-minute creation. Readers should look for narrative structures and amplifying detail which will entertain with a particular view of the world (expression) and which will account for a given situation (explanation). The reader's problem is to balance vividness, inventiveness, and aptness against consistency provided by a sustained structure and point of view.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = No evidence of storytelling. These responses do not show evidence of storytelling. Thus, they either accumulate details without a situation to anchor and unite them, or they add just a few descriptive details to one of the situations provided in the stem.

2 = Some evidence of storytelling. These responses attempt the basic task of storytelling They invent a situation to account for the bird, but the fictional demands are fundamentally unfulfilled for one of several reasons: 1) the response may give the bare outline of a plot, with a beginning, middle and end, but little or no elaboration of detail; 2) the response may have no sense of a plot, but may simply ramble on from the initial situation with many details, but with no process or purpose to give it point or structure; 3) the response may begin telling a story, but never get further than the beginning; 4) the response may relate several separate stories without evident connection between them.

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

3 = Clear evidence of storytelling. These responses clearly show evidence of the storyteller's obligation to structure a plot and elaborate it with appropriate details. Thus they show a markedly greater sense of coherence with amplitude than "2" responses. But they are usually somewhat flawed in one of the following ways: 1) one or another part of the basic plot may be thinly or inconsistently detailed; 2) the situation may be established, the plot developed, but the piece may come to an end without a clear or appropriate closure; 3) the plot may be completely elaborated, but it contains technical inconsistencies in point of view, handling of dialogue or management of narration.

4 = Structure and complete storytelling. These responses tell a complete story, amply as well as appropriately detailed at all points, and fully as well as consistently resolved. They exhibit tight control in the management of a whole fiction to provide context for the status of the bird.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

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COHESION SCORING GUIDE
(Developed for the 1978-79 Writing Assessment)
"STORK"

In scoring papers for cohesion, scorers need to be attentive not only to the incidence of cohesive ties but also to their successful ordering. Underlying and further strengthening these ties is syntactic repetition, both within and across sentences. The following example achieves cohesion by lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, and substitution, and yet these various kinds of cohesion are both emphasized and related among themselves by numerous incidents of syntactic repetition.

> Yesterday afternoon while coming home from school, I saw this odd-looking bird. Not knowing what it was, I stopped the car and picked it up. That was a very bad mistake. The poor thing was afraid of the car. While I was driving along it began to jump around and scream. The best thing I knew to do was to take the bird back to where I got it. So I did. It was perfectly contented. So there I left it and I went on home.

When both the incidence and ordering of cohesive ties pattern the entire piece of writing, the writer has created what we ordinarily call coherence.

Scoring Guide Categories:

1 = Little or no evidence of cohesion. Basically, clauses and sentences are not connected beyond pairings.

2 = Attempts at cohesion. There is evidence of gathering details but little or no evidence that these details are meaningfully ordered. In other words, very little seems lost if the details were rearranged.

3 = Cohesion. Details are both gathered and ordered. Cohesion is achieved in the ways illustrated briefly in the definition above. Cohesion does not necessarily lead to coherence, to the successful binding of parts so that the sense of the whole discourse is greater than the sense of its parts. In pieces of writing that are cohesive rather than coherent, there are large sections of details which cohere but these sections stand apart as sections.

4 = Coherence. While there may be a sense of sections within the piece of writing, the sheer number and variety of cohesion startegies bind the details and sections into a wholeness. This sense of wholeness can be achieved by a saturation of syntactic repetition throughout the piece (see description above) and/or by closure which retrospectively orders the entire piece and/or by general statements which organize the whole piece.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

NOTE: Scorers should not take mechanics or transcription errors into consideration. Also, the scorers should judge only the interrelatedness of the ideas, NOT the quality of those ideas.

Examples of Cohesive Ties:

In general, "cohesion" refers to the ways clauses and sentences are related to each other and can be thought of as the gathering and ordering of related ideas. If the parts of a discourse cohere, they "stick" or are "bound" together. Cohesion is achieved by ties of considerable variety, and these ties can be both semantic and structural. Additional examples of specific kinds of cohesion ties are identified by Halliday and Hasan in Cohesion in English.

Lexical Re-naming

The bird seemed very frightened. I ran into the house to get some food to feed the bird.

Semantic Conjunction

Additive -
Henry's bird is getting bigger by the day; in addition, he is eating us out of house and home.

Adversative -
I know I saw the bird taking a bath in our sprinkler; however, by the time I had convinced my mother, he was gone.

Causal -
My mother said I couldn't keep the bird; consequently, I gave him to our neighbor.

Temporal -
We decided to catch the bird. First, I told my brother to get a box, then, we put him in it. Now, he is our pet.

Pronominal Reference

Personal -
This odd-looking bird just stood and looked at me and I could see he was tame.

Demonstrative -
When I first saw the bird, I ran. That sight would frighten anyone.

Comparative -
Did you know there is a bird swimming around in our pool and he is taller than me.

Pro-form Substitution

Nominal -
I tried to find the odd-looking bird everyone was talking about but all I saw were the usual ones.

Clausal (use of so and not) -
I asked if the bird was dangerous and the policeman said he thought not.

Ellipsis

Nominal -
Everyone said the bird would be there in the morning but I stayed up to make sure [ ].

Verbal -
This odd-looking bird started jumping around in the back seat of my car. The only thing I could do was let it go so I did [ ].

Clausal -
I have never seen a bird as ugly as that [ ].

Note: While helping plan the 1978-79 writing assessment, National Assessment consultants expressed the opinion that coherence and cohesion deserved special consideration and that a more thorough method of describing information about coherence was needed. In consequence, this cohesion scoring guide was developed and used with the "Stork" exercise to replace the paragraph coherence guidelines developed in 1973-74 and used with the "Describe Something" exercise.

SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

Last night a very odd looking bird appeared in The Neighborhood it was very big and tall No one saw The big bird but me The bird have a big bek and A long leg and A small body

* * * * *

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeard in the neighborhood it was black and red it big it has long lig it eye was blue

Score Point 2

This odd-looking bird has extremely thin legs with gigantic feet. Some say he has a very peculiar beak and when you look at him face to face it seems as though his eyes will bulge right out. Very few adults have seen him since he came to the neighborhood, but the children know him because this fellow that has been described is the new student teacher in town & teaches at the town school.

* * * * *

"But, mother, I am telling the truth! It laid an egg in the "Chevy". last night. It was a brand new Chevy truck. when I woke in the morning I went to see the truck if it was aright. when I saw it the wheels had flip out from under it and the egg when in to back. I thought it was a egg but I was not sure so I ran into the house and called the police to come find out what is was I went back outside and I saw this stork fly ing arons the barn I was thinking that maybe that had laid

Score Point 3

"But, mother, I am telling the truth! it laid an egg in the Chevy. This poor bird, whose name is Carleton, was kicked out of the bird sanctuary he lived in because he violated curfew. So, he has been wandering around trying to find a decent home to live in. He picks the place and he will be hurt if we turn him down. Besides, he can provide our eggs for us and be enterain as well. We can rent him out, teach him to do a comedy act. He'll be no trouble at all. Can we please keep him, mom?" "Well, all right children I suppose it won't hurt to try. Maybe he will come in handy at being a house bird. At night he can sit on the roof and protect the house against any burglers." And that is the story of Carelton. He protected the house, talked & did funny shows for the neighborhood kids. And they all lived happily ever after

* * * * *

Last night uncle Harry went to bed when he woke up he felt a bit weird. He went over to the mirror, he looked in and what a shock he got. He had long skinny legs and a big beak he tried to rub his eyes but he couldn't. He looked down at his body and saw wings where his arms were suppose to be. He got all excited and started fliing around the room.

After a long time of thinking he figured he couldn't change back, so he decide to fly south for the winter.

Score Point 4

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood. Mr. Raymond Frice, a trusted citizen in the neighborhood, was the first person to see the bird. He said it was big and yellow and had a wing span of about twenty

(Continued)

feet. I was not scared until I saw the bird. When I did cold flashes and heat waves pulsated my body. I became distraught. Suddenly the bird hovered over me and appeared as if he was going to attack. Luckily I had my trustworthy slingshot with me and I was able to kill the bird. Instantly I became a hero around town just because of what happened last night. Now I'm thankful that bird scared me, it looks like he will change my whole life from one of a nobody to one of a somebody.

* * * * *

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood. As it gracefully landed on the street, I approached it. suddenly the bird began to talk. "excuse me," he said, "could you please direct me to the nearest bird hotel"? stunned and surprised, I curiously look at the bird. "O how thoughtless of me. My name is Jerimiah crow," the bird said. Thinking quickly, I deduced that this has to be some sort of joke. I look around, but no one was in sight. Finally, I answered the bird, "I'm terribly sorry but I know of no bird hotel in the neighborhood." The bird looked at me and then replied, "thank you so much for your trouble" then, quick as a flash he was gone. stunned I walked home. When I arrived, my older brother asked me if I had just seen a strange looking bird. Shocked, I anxiously told him my story. He began to laugh. "That was no bird," he said, "That was johns robot." I looked at him in disbelief and then began to laugh I remembered that today was April fool's Day.

Cohesion

Score Point 1

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighbourhood and then left.

* * * * *

The long tall big mother bird that was big enough to eat a cat, and bird and egg in the Claw, appeared in the neighborhood last night

Score Point 2

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood his wing was white and his face with Two agly eyes were looking around To find something To eat. The bird has agly feet That I Saw in my life. so The neighborhood's feel was so sorry for That. agly birds and They leT him To go

* * * * *

The [illegible] found a bird and he began to like the bird. It was a funny looking bird. It stood on one leg and it had a long bill. The boy didn't tell anyone he had the bird. He decide to tell his mother. His mother didn't want the bird around the house, but he want bird to stay.

Score Point 3

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood, It was very long legged and was Carring a sack around its beck, If I'm no mistakin he was delivering a baby to our next-door neighbors. They they told me they were expecting a baby

He went into the Johnson's house and came out and still had the sac. I figured he was lost but I just watched and waited. He went into several different houses and still had the sac. Finally he came to our house, I asked him what was in the bag, and it was just some Classic Dill pickles mom forgot at the grocery store.

Last night uncle Jerry went to bed when he woke up he felt a bit weird. He went over to the mirror, he looked in and what a shock he got. He had long, skinny legs and a big beak, he tried to suck his eyes back but he couldn't. He looked down at his body and saw wings where his arms were supposed to be. He got all excited and started fliing around the room.

After a long time of thinking he figured he couldn't change back, so he decide to fly south for the winter.

Score Point 4

Last night a very odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood. No one knew of him until this morning when the neighbors boy, Tommy told of him. He said that the bird came down the chimney with a cloth of some kind shaped like a sling between his beak. There was something moving inside of it, but it was too dark for Tommy to tell what it was. The bird then proceeded to fly up the stairs and to his mothers and fathers room. Tommy was too scared to follow him, so he hid in his room til' morning. In the morning Tommy ran upstairs to see what the bird had brought, and in a small bed beside his parents bed was a baby, a tiny little baby. Tommy was so happy that he went out and told the whole neighbor-hood of how the odd-looking bird brought to their house a little baby brother.

"Mom, there's this odd looking bird in our backyard." "Go chase it away before the cat can catch it." "I don't think the will catch it. I'm afraid it will catch the cat." "What are you talking about. Let me take a look." She looks at the bird and becomes dizzy as if to faint. "Oh my God, get the cats inside before something happens." We go to bring the cats inside when one of them goes to smell the bird. All of a sudden the bird picks up the cat and puts this
cat on it's back and gives it a ride around the yard. My mother started laughing and after a while we fed the bird & decided to keep it.

"Grape Peeler" Exercise

Sometimes people write just for the fun of it. We thought we would give you a chance to have some fun writing.

Suppose you ordered from the Golden Fleece Mart, Ripoff, Wisconsin, a gold-plated electric banana peeler advertised for $1.98. Several days later you received a letter stating that the supply of gold-plated electric banana peelers was temporarily exhausted but that your order would be filled as soon as they received more gold. You have never received the banana peeler but every week since then you have received a letter assuring you that your order would be filled as soon as they received more gold.

Now you have received a letter from the store's manager, Mr. Jason Jones, informing you that they were unable to obtain any additional gold and that in the meantime they exhausted their supply of banana peelers. However, they just received a special supply of yellow paint and electric grape peelers and they are happy to inform you that your yellow enamel-coated electric grape peeler is on its way to you.

Write a letter to Mr. Jason Jones. Space is provided on the next two pages.

Have fun writing!

WRITING TASK: Grape Peeler

NAEP #: 0-101015-52A-3

RHETORICAL MODE: Expressive

OBJECTIVE: I. Demonstrates ability in writing to reveal personal feelings and ideas.

SUBOBJECTIVE: A. Through free expression

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Imaginative elaboration of a humorous fiction.

Secondary Trait: Elements of "Having Fun" (Limited to 3 and 4 papers)

AGE:	17
TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS:	1040
NUMBER OF LINES:	p.1 - 21 p.2 - 26

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"GRAPE PEELER"

Rhetorical Mode: Expressive

Primary Trait: Imaginative elaboration of a humorous fiction.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The crucial word at the beginning and end of the exercise is "fun". In an effort to keep writers from taking the problem seriously as "business," they are offered several humorous points of departure. Both kinds of peelers are unusual--made more so by the addition of electric. Gold vs. yellow paint adds to the story, and even the cheap price helps. The Fleece Mart and Ripoff, Wisconsin, are further cues.

General Scoring Rationale: The main problem is to separate the "1" and "2" papers from the "3" and "4" papers. "1" and "2" papers take the task seriously, even though "2's" may hint at the humor in the situation. The "3" and "4" papers demonstrate overt efforts at humor. The "3's" may demonstrate an effort to reinforce the absurdity or they may pick up on some of the verbal plays and "4's" elaborate the situation by exploiting the absurdity and/or the verbal plays.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Serious discourse. Papers in which the writers seem to take the instruction to write a letter as a test of business skill. All such responses--no matter how well done--do not demonstrate an attempt at humor on any level, verbal or situational.

2 = Ambiguous discourse. Papers which are neither clearly funny nor clearly straightforward and serious. These papers do not contain any sure cues of humor. On the other hand, there may be suspicious amounts of extra detail, or slightly excessive repetition of funny details from the directive. There may also be invective and abusive language. But, these features are not in themselves clear signs that the writer took the task humorously.

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

3 = Humor in passing. Papers that contain plays on language, funny names or other verbal or situational symptoms of humor but which do not offer much extension of the fictional situation itself. These writers are clearly amused and give clear evidence of entering into the spirit of having fun but stay fairly close to the already established absurdity, limiting themselves largely to linguistic byplay.

4 = Humorous discourse. The entire response or a substantial portion of it is an extended joke or a series of verbal plays. Some of these papers may achieve extended humor through sustained irony, rather than explicit joking, but even the ironic responses will contain cues to establish a humorous rather than serious intention. Although "4" responses will likely contain various kinds of word play, such as puns, sound effects, far-fetched metaphors, their humor will be found to grow out of situational extensions of or variations on the basically absurd situation introduced in the exercise.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

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Secondary Traits: Elements of "Having Fun" (Limited to 3 and 4 papers)

Situational Invention: Papers in the elaboration category contain an elaboration or invention of a situation beyond that presented in the exercise. The elaborators invent extensions of the basic business situation--another form of peeler or another related device (prune pitter, coconut crackers). Papers in the creation category contain the creation of a world or a fantasy in which banana peelers and grape peelers seem to exist--a monkey farm or a banana plantation, for example.

Elaborate Repetition: These papers contain efforts to produce humor by frequent repetition of cumbersome phrases or key words. Examples include frequent repetition of full item names or repeated use of banana or grape stem name with other devices or products (banana casserole, banana soup, banana tea, etc.).

Verbal Wit: This is defined principally as puns and literary allusions. Examples would be plays on "fleece" and fancy literary allusions relating Jason and the Golden Fleece with the Argonauts. Allusions to Tarzan and Jane as well as plays on "rip-off" are also counted. Funny signatures should also be categorized here.

Situational Invention: (see definition above)

1 = Elaboration.
2 = Creation.
3 = Not present.

Elaborate Repetition: (see definition above)

1 = Present.
2 = Not present.

Verbal Wit: (see definition above)

1 = Present.
2 = Not present.

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SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

DEAR MR. JONES,

I'M WRITING REGARDING THE BANANA PEALER THAT I ORDERED FOR $1.98 FROM GOLDEN FLEECE MARKET. I'M VERY DISATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE. FOR WEEKS NOW I HAVE BEEN RECIEVING LETTERS THAT SAID YOU WOULD BE WAITING A SHIPMENT OF GOLD SO THAT MY BANANA PEALER WOULD BE SENT TO ME. FINALLY, I DID RECIEVE A PACKAGE FROM YOU. BUT INSTEAD OF HAVING A GOLD PLATED BANANA PEALER IN IT, THERE WAS A YELOW ENAMAL GRAPE PEALER. THEREFORE I AM RETURNING THE GRAPE PEALER AND I WOULD LIKE MY MONEY BACK

THANK YOU.

SINCERELY,

John Doe

* * * * *

Mr Jason Jone:

For the last couple months I have been recieving letters from you saying what you were temparorily out of gold for my gold-plated banana peeler. I just recieved another letter stating what you are unable to obtain the gold and that a yellow enamel-coated electric grape peeler is on its way to me. I do not have no use for this electric grape peeler, and when I recieve it I will return it immediatly. In addition I will be waiting for my $1.98 to be returned

Thank you

Score Point 2

Dear Mr. Jason Jones,

Thank-you for sending the yellow-enamel-coated electric grape peeler, but I already have one. So as soon as I recieve the grape peeler I will send it back to you. If you are not able to send me my gold-plated electric banana peeler, I would like to have a refund. The totals amount I had paid was $2.25 in cash. Thank-you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Miss Ann

* * * * *

Daar Mr. Jonas:

I'm much obilige for your offer to racaiva a spacial supply of yallow paint and alactric grape paalars. But I raally wouldn't naad an alactric grapa paalars, bacausa I dont paal my grapas, I aat tham whole.

I would also lika to commant on your gold-plated alactric banana paalars. I don't maan to ba ruda, but I actially think you navar had a gold-plated alactric banana paalars you promisad ma and promise ma that I would gat it and navar did bacausa of the lousy EXCUSE you gave me. There fore I request for you to not send ma the Electric grape paalars.

Thank you,

Mrs. John Doe

Score Point 3

Dear Mr. Jones

If you are unable to send me a gold plated electric banana peeler which I need desperately than I would prefer you send my money back because for one thing I hate grapes and I dont want a fake grape peeler. Every week I have had letters telling me that I would get my banana peeler but I have never receive it. I dont feel you ever had any banana peelers but I need one because my son eats bananas all the time and half the time he can't get the skin off so he eats it and the rest of the time there will be banana peeling laying all around the house. I am sorry that you have no more but I would truly like my money back before to long.

If you recive any banana peelers in the future please inform me.

Sincerely yours
(Banana lover)

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Jason Jones,

I have recived your correspondence concerning my order of the g-p banana peeler. Your store isn't worth a d---- and I wouldn't give a s--- about having a yellow enamel coated electric grape peeler. I hate grapes !!! Come to think of it I hate bananas !!! I don't know which I'm doing ordering from a fruity store like yours. I want my [illegible] back. However if you persist in your attempts to sell me any more of your d---- fruit peeling machines I shall personally make a trip from my hometown [illegible], Nebraska and do unto you.

Very sincerely Yours

Score Point 4

Dear Mr Jones,

I have no intention of accepting your grape peeler. Not only does my family not eat grapes, but I wanted gold not yellow enamel. My kitchen utensils are all gold plated and enamel would simply not fit in. If by some chance, you have any platinum door stops I will accept them as a replacement. If not please refund my money. Your grape peeler will be refunded to you.

Sincerely your,
Alexandra Poindexter

P.S.

Please send me door knobs to match the doorstops if you have them in stock. I'll only accept platinum, not gold, etc.

A.P.

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Jones,

I nearly hit the ceiling, when you informed me that I was getting a useless electric grape peeler instead of the fabulous gold-plated electric banana peeler that you had promised me from the very beginning. Fortunately my chandelier was in the way so I didn't hit the ceiling, I hit my chandelier and it fell down on top of me.

My lawyer will be in touch with you soon. Oh, I didn't tell you, I am laying here in my hospital bed after brain surgery. See, it all happened when I about hit the ceiling over my promised gold-plated banana peelers and my chandelier fell on me. Therefore, I am filing suit against your stupid RIPOFF company in Wisconsin for $250,000.00

Sincerely yours,
MRS. Brownswager

"Rec Center" Exercise

Some high school students have proposed converting an old house into a recreation center where young people might drop in evenings for talk and relaxation. Some local residents oppose the plan on the grounds that the center would depress property values in the neighborhood and attract undesirable types. A public hearing has been called. Write a brief speech that you would make supporting or opposing the plan. Remember to take only ONE point of view. Organize your arguments carefully and be as convincing as possible. Space is provided below and on the next three pages.

WRITING TASK: Recreation Center

NAEP #: 0-201007-52A-3

RHETORICAL MODE: Persuasive - Social/Community

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: A. Social 3. Community

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Persuasion through invention and elaboration of arguments appropriate to specified issues and limited to an audience with a mixed bias.

AGE:	17
TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS:	998
NUMBER OF LINES:	p.1 - 11 p.2 - 25 p.3 - 21 p.4 - 26

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"RECREATION CENTER"

Rhetorical Mode: Persuasive - Social/Community

Primary Trait: Persuasion through invention and elaboration of arguments appropriate to specified issues and limited to an audience with a mixed bias.

Rationale of Primary Trait: This task represents controversial situations that prevail in any civilized society-- situations which are resolved by a deliberative response. The directive to "be as convincing as possible" indicates the persuasive orientation of the task. It requires that respondents develop and support arguments appropriate to their position.

General Scoring Rationale: Support may consist of evidence and/or appeals to general truths, to experience, or to social and economic values. The support must be consistent with the position and should be of at least moderate length to demonstrate competence (scale point "3"). Excellence is achieved by demonstrating a capacity not only to invert and support arguments but also by addressing both sides of a controversial issue. Thus, the most successful respondents will be able to support their case on its own merits as well as answer or refute at moderate length the causes of the opposition.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Do not define and defend a point of view. Some of these papers have not explicitly or implicitly taken a position. Others may contain a thesis statement or clearly imply a position but do not give several supporting reasons to develop their arguments. Some typical score point "1" papers present:

(a) Attitudes and opinions about related social issues without a clear statement of position--these include free-floating, uncontrolled statements of opinion showing no concern for taking a stand and supporting it.

(b) Position statements but no related support--often these papers merely reiterate their stand in various forms.

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

(c) Position statements preceded or followed by elaborate introductions.

(d) Position statements followed by arguments and appeals not connected to the crucial issues.

(e) Position statements followed by one or two undeveloped reasons.

(f) Position statements but the paper goes off tangentially into another realm (clarifying terms, personal gripes, etc.)

2 = Define a point of view and offer minimal defense. These papers explicitly state or strongly imply a position and give one or more clusters of arguments or appeals. (A cluster is a reason asserted with no more than one or two bits of evidence or related appeal.) Score point "2" papers usually consist of a chain of briefly developed appeals in support of a position or answering the opposition. They do not develop a line of argument or link the clusters to each other. (The underlying assumption is that the lines of arguments, reasons or appeals are appropriate to the issue.)

3 = Define and defend a point of view. These papers clearly state or imply a position and present at least one substantially developed line of argument or two moderately developed lines of argument relevant to the issues at hand. More evidence to support the position is presented than in "2" papers.

4 = Systematically define and defend a point of view. These papers present at least two moderately developed lines of argument, one which supports the position and one which answers the possible arguments raised by the opposition. The lines of argument usually will be linked as well as carefully organized. Other "4" papers may contain a moderate statement of support with a brief address answering each of the major opposition positions.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

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SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

I think that it would be good for teenage students to have some place to go, because if they don't the could be out getting into some Kind of trouble.

* * * * *

I think you even is oppose to making the old house a center for kids is a hipocrit. You say you want to see the kids of today off the street at night and inbolved in some kind of activity. But when it comes right down to it. No one wants to give alittle and help the kids find a place to go.

So if everyone here is not all for the center we are just kidding our selfs, be cause as soon as we get it some reason will come up and it will be taken away again.

Thank you

Score Point 2

When a person has nothing to do, he'll sometimes find something bad to do. If there is a place a student can have good clean fun, as with a recreation center under proper guidance, these people can for the most part stay out of trouble. I feel that under proper supervision, the recreation center would be promising to cut the crime rate. The local residents should consider this, and it would be to their benefit to permit the old house to be cleaned & fixed up for the purpose of recreation.

I am supporting the plan because this is a very good idea & I feel it would be good for the young people. They can have a goal in refurnishing this old house and after, it can be a very rewarding experience. Young people need a place to go to when things at home are looming. This project shall prove rewarding to the community if it is under well supervision by volunteers who are interested in seeing that the project is done in a correct manner and under good control.

Score Point 3

I think converting an old house into a recreation center for young people is a exalent idea. The Kids will probally clean up the house and yard since it is for there own use. To take care of the house might give them a feeling of responsibility.

Nowdays I would say that the high-school students have the most responsibilty of anyone going to school. Schools have gotten much harder & there is more work. This house would provide a place where the students relax and socialize. Thus this house might relieve some of the pressure on the students. If the kids did take care of their house, this might prepare them for there future life. This house will get the students off the streets and out of trouble. It will also provide a shelter over their heads. This house will provide a place where the students can talk and slowly work their problems out. If the students use the house for their benifits and use it responsibily, I see no reason to take it away. I Know one thing for sure, I wish we had a vacant house in our neighborhood because it sure would be helpful I am totally in support of this idea.

a recreation center could be an advantage to the whole community. the work on the house could restore some beauty to the whole neighborhood. the work would be done entirely by the kids, themselves and materials could be obtained from lumber yards scraps. It could be a very education project as well for the kids would be learning how to work together, use their creativity and keep them busy. Another advantage would be that parents would know exactly where their son or daughter are and so would not have to worry about them wandering the streets where they could get into trouble. Of course certain rules would be set up - such as no alcoholic beverages, no smoking and no drugs. Certain recreational games would be set up such as a pool and ping pong table, air hockey, a card table and darts. Couches and chairs would be set up for kids who would just like to talk and relax. A good time for kids to talk over their problems and get things off their minds. So, for a project that would be advantagous to all I strongly suggest for the committee to favor it.

Score Point 4

We are attending this hearing for a reason that actually is very cruciall to some young people in our community. They have proposed a plan which, on their part, would require a large amount of time, responsibility and sufficient funds. When we as adults heard that some of our "children" wanted to strike out a little on their own and have a type of community youth center, we of course put our foot down! and told our children to behave

(Continued)

themselves - Now, I'm not trying to overly react in their favor because I realize the complications that could involve - the most serious of which would be the attraction of undesirable people. Perhaps this could be combatted by a young adult or perhaps college student acting as a guidance counselor. At any rate, if we are so close-minded that we believe our children don't meet these types at the other places they go for recreation, we are being fooled into a false utopia.

Instead of demanding that this house turn into a house of ill-repute, we, as adults, could just as easily make this a chance for our children to develop responsibility in the work that would be involved in cleaning and fixing the place up. They would have to raise money, devote time and effort, and generally sacrifice some things that would take some responsibility to sacrifice. These children are at the age where they need to start striking out on their own a certain amount. I don't mean let them do anything with the house but allow them some freedom. For sure, they will probably make some wrong decisions and if they aren't too drastic we should let them go ahead. There is no better learning exercise than making a mistake and realizing it.

The assumption of depressed property value must surely have been made by some adult that had a deprived sense of responsibility as a young person. Surely if they are fixing the house the property value will not decrease.

We should consider these facts, the pros and the cons, before we take from our future adults the chance for growing with responsibility.

"Ladies and gentlemen, as a spokesman for the students of this organization, I would like to clear some of the problems you might be anticipating about this student project. First let me state that the old house when converted into a drop-in or recreation center, will be greatly appreciated. All the students are really hoping for this center. The participation in this project is fantastic. There is nothing in this for the students as far as money goes. They would all be putting in their time and muscle on a voluntary basis because they realize that the finished project will be something that is well used, not missused, and it can be something that they are proud of, because they had a helpful hand in the creation of their drop-in center.

As for your property values I doubt if they would go down at all. If anything they would go down with this old house existing the way it is right now. The old house would be fixed up so that it would be able to stand without problems for another century. The outside would be painted the lawn kept up, the inside cleaned out and fixed up. When it is done it should look just as good if not better than some of your own homes!

(Continued)

Not only would this be a good opportunity for the kids to get together, but it will also keep them out of trouble. Their parents will know there going someplace to be with their friends, and stay out of trouble, stay off the streets. Also if a group of students have a group report to complete for school, this is a very good place for them to go and get it done. There will be studying facility there, also. So I hope you will take a second view now from what I have said, but I want you to know this project was set up with great results hopefully. And we intend to keep the place up, if we can get your vote, after we got it. Thank you" THE END - CLAP! CLA

"Electric Blanket" Exercise

Suppose that on June 4, 1978, you ordered an electric blanket that Big Mart had advertised for $14.98. On June 15, you received a letter stating that the supply of electric blankets was temporarily exhausted, but that your order would be filled shortly. You have never received the electric blanket, but every month since then you have received a computerized bill for the $14.98.

Now, after three months, you have received the letter below.

BIG MART INC.
P.O. Box 29
Buffalo, New York 14240

September 10, 1978

In reply refer to

Account 64377

Dear Customer:

According to our records your account has been unpaid for three months If there has been an error, please let us know what the problem is.

We hope that within ten days we will receive $14.98. Otherwise, we will have to refer your account to our collection service.

Very truly yours,

Jason Jones
Accounts Manager

Pretend that you are Pat Brown and write a letter to Mr Jones explaining why you never sent the $14.98.

WRITING TASK: Electric Blanket

NAEP #: 0-202014-52A-3

RHETORICAL MODE: Explanatory Business

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: B. Business/Vocational

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Situationally routine explanation by means of crucial detail.

Secondary Trait: Self-Expression

AGE: 17

TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS: 896

NUMBER OF LINES: p.1 - 19
p.2 - 26

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"ELECTRIC BLANKET"

Rhetorical Mode: Explanatory - Business

Primary Trait: Situationally routine explanation by means of crucial detail.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The directive requires respondents to clearly communicate the information necessary to explain the situation. Since the information is given, the writer needs to recognize the pertinent details and transcribe them in a manner that conforms to the conventions of business letter writing. The main issue, however, is will the letter accomplish its purpose. The tone and style of the letter are of lesser importance.

General Scoring Rationale: The main criteria for rating this exercise is the presence and accuracy of the information transmitted. The basic task is accomplished if the writer is identified, the situation is explained and a directive is given. The other information serves to amplify the letter and increase the chances that the Big Mart will be able to solve the problem.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = The letter is in some crucial sense incomplete. The writer is not identified and/or the situation is not explained and/or a directive is not given.

2 = The writer is identified, reference is made to both the bill/collection letter and the product, and at least implies Big Mart should clear up the matter.

3 = The writer identifies account number or name and address, refers to bill/collection letter, denies receiving product and gives clear direction for future action.

4 = The writer identifies account number, mentions date and receipt of bill/letter, denies receiving product and gives clear direction for future action. The letter also includes other information that serves to amplify and increases the chances that Big Mart will solve the problem.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

NOTE: To maximize reporting capabilities National Assessment categorized the following information. The four trait categories were derived through data analysis.

I. Identification of Writer of Letter

1 = no identification
2 = name only
3 = name and address
4 = account number

II. Statement of Situation

A. Reference to Bill/Collection Letter

1 = no mention of receipt of bill/letter
2 = mentions receipt of bill/letter (may or may not include vague references to time)
3 = mentions date and receipt of bill/letter

B. Reference to Product/Electric Blanket

1 = does not mention product/electric blanket
2 = mentions blanket but does not explain it was never received
3 = denies receiving product/electric blanket

III. Directive

1 = future action suggested inappropriate (unlawful or violent) or unclear.
2 = leaves future action up to Big Mart (please clear this up) or does not propose any further action or solution implying Big Mart should clear up the matter.
3 = gives clear proposal for future action (send blanket, won't pay, cancel order, sue, cancel account)

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

IV. Other Helpful Information

A. Reference to Initial Order of Blanket

1 = [illegible]n't refer to initial order of blanket
2 = mentions initial order (may or may not make vague references to time)
3 = states date and refers to original order
4 = offers copy of original order

B. Reference to Backorder Letter (June 15, Supply Exhausted)

1 = no mention of backorder letter
2 = mentions backorder letter (may or may not make vague references to time)
3 = states date and refers to backorder letter
4 = offers copy of backorder letter

C. Reference to Repeated Billing

1 = no mention of repeated billing
2 = mentions repeated billing
3 = states length of time or number of bills received
4 = discusses, explains, or mentions actions or efforts related to trying to stop or straighten out repeated billing

Secondary Trait: Self-Expression

In many ways the incidental features of this exercise are more interesting than the primary ones. Because the informative, persuasive elements are routine, it is easy to see why some writers took the opportunity to do more than was really required. A basic division into "rhetorical" and "self-expressive" papers can be made. "Rhetorical" papers are those which accept the problem as stated and basically restrict themselves to the situation. "Self-expressive" papers devote space to revealing feelings either directly in invective and farcical action or indirectly in wit and other verbal cleverness.

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Secondary Trait: Self-Expression (continued):

11 = Rhetorical, perfunctory or neutral

These are factual, businesslike papers, which may or may not include conventional politeness. These papers present the facts and are characterized by plain language and the absence of overt clues of active conciliation or hostility.

21 = Rhetorical, conciliatory

These papers are pleasant and understanding. The writers are trying to maintain the goodwill of Mr. Jones and may explain away the error of the company or be very pleasant or even apologetic.

22 = Rhetorical, hostile or strong bargaining

Some of these papers propose vigorous hostile counter-action: calling Better Business Bureau, cancel account, call lawyer, sue. Other "22" papers include nasty remarks or expressions of literal anger. The writers are annoyed, irritated and unjustly accused.

31 = Expressive, witty

Some of these papers offer brief jests or amusing additions, plays on language, funny names, or other symptoms of humor (postscripts indicating fear of freezing). Papers including witty sarcasm or intellectualized anger, depersonalized by clever language, may also be classified in this category.

32 = Expressive, farce and invective

In these papers the weight is on the hostility rather than on the practical action. Farce will be represented in excessive physical acts (punch in the nose - acts from the Three Stooges or other clowns) and other illegal and indecent acts. The threats could be taken seriously, but it would seem safer to assume that it is anger finding expression in the comic strip or farce. Probably in the real world such threats would not be made, but if they were, serious intent would be absent.

NOTE: Technically, even a simple statement of anger should be classified as expressive. However, unless the anger can be associated with farce and invective, for these purposes, such papers are categorized with the strong bargainers of "22."

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SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

Pat Brown
10 Elm St
Staten Island N.Y.

Dear Mr. Jones,

I am writing because of the error made on my account. I never riecived the Electric blanket cause there wasn't enough in stock, I am waiting patiently for my order to be filled.

Thank you,
Pat Brown

• • • • •

58 South Street
Buffalo N.Y.
Dec. 9, 19 7

Big Mart INC
P.O. Box 49
Buffalo, N.Y. 14240

Dear Sir;

When you advertised the electric blanket I sent the check in with my order of the blanket.

Since then I have recieved 3 monthly computerized bills for the blanket I already paid for.

Very truly yours,
Pat Jones
Customer

Score Point 2

Dear Sir:

I am writing you this note so that I may inform you that I do not owe you $14.98 because I never received the electric blanket which I ordered three months ago. I suppose you will refer my account to your collection service even though I never received what I orderd but did receive a bill. If this is the move who you wish to make, feel free to because I will not be shopping at your store in the future.

Yours truly,
Pat Brown

• • • • •

Jason Jones
Account Manager September 11, 197
Big Mart

Dear Sir,

I have just recieved your lette concerning my accout at Big Mart and I would like to report an error in your bill. On June 4, 197 I ordered an electric blanket for $14.98. On June 15 I recieved a lett reporting that your blanket supply was temporarily exhausted but that my order would soon be filled. Th blanket never arrived at my hom and hence your bill for the $14.98 is invalid. I hope this situation can be remedied.

Sincerely,
Patricia Brow

Score Point 3

Dear Mr. Jones,

I'm Refering to the letter or rather the bill you sent me for $14.98. I believe I am being charged for a blanket in which I never received. I hope you will send me the electric blanket that I have ordered nearly three months ago, and then I will be happy to pay this bill.

Sincerely yours,
Pat Brown

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Jones,

There must be an error on your part because I have NEVER recieved the electric blanket I have been billed for. Every month since I ordered the product I have been billed but I have never seen the blanket.

Therefore I would ask you to send the electric blanket or stop sending me the bill.

Sincerely yours,
Pat Brown

Score Point 4

September 11, 1973
Pat Brown
117 Elm avenue

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter on Sept 10, 1973, when you stated that my account was unpaid and ask if there was an error — on your part, well there has been one. On June 4, 1973 I order an eletric blanket advertised at 14.98. On June 15, 1973 I recieved a letter stating that the supply of electric blankets was temporarily exhausted, but that your company would soon fill my order. Since then I have gotten 3 bills for $14.98 and still have not recieved the blanket. This has been the problem and as soon as I recieve my electric blanket I will be more then happy to pay the bill.

Truly yours
Mrs Pat. Brown

* * * * *

Sept 15, 1978
Account 64377

Dear Mr. Jones

In reference to your letter of September 10, 1978. The electric blanket which I had ordered on June 4, 1978 and was to recieve shortly afterwards, was never recieved by myself. I recieved a letter on June 15, 1978 stating your supply of electric blankets was temprarily exhausted but my order was to be filled sho ly. I have never recieved that electric blanket yet I recieve a computerized bill for $14.98 every month. I suggest that your sto department check their records of what has been shipped out and when, or I will contact my lawyer upon arrival of the next bill.

Sincerely
Pat Brown

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR SYNTAX AND MECHANICS ANALYSIS

Appendix B contains outlines of the features National Assessment hand tabulated for the T-unit analysis of syntax, the sentence-type analysis, and the mechanics analysis. It should be noted that since National Assessment computerized the text of all the papers involved in these studies, basic descriptive counts (average essay length, average word length, etc.) were machine tabulated. Rationales, as well as detailed definitions of the outlined features, are contained in Mullis and Mellon (1980). Also, the detailed guidelines used by the scorers who accomplished these tabulations are available from National Assessment.

SYNTAX SCORING GUIDE OUTLINE
T-UNIT ANALYSIS
(Developed for the 1978-79 Writing Assessment)
"Stork" -- Narrative Exercise

I. T-unit delineation -- A T-unit is one main clause with all its phrases and subordinating clauses. (Fragments are included with either the preceding or the following T-unit, as appropriate.)

II. Embedding

- A. Nominalization
  - 1. Nominal Clauses -- clauses used as subjects, direct objects, subject complements or objects of prepositions.
  - 2. Nominal Phrases -- phrases used as subjects, direct objects, subject complements or objects of prepositions.
- B. Modification
  - 1. Adjectival
    - a. Relative Clauses -- clauses that modify nouns or, occasionally, complete sentences including clauses of time, place and manner.
    - b. Modifying Phrases -- restrictive and non-restrictive phrases directly following the nouns they modify, appositives (some "of" phrases).
    - c. Transposed Modifying Phrases -- non-restrictive phrases separated from the nouns they modify, verbal phrases, nominative absolutes, appositive noun phrases.
    - d. Genitives -- possessive phrases, pre-noun proper name possessives and possessive pronouns.
    - e. Single Word Pre-noun Modifiers -- adjectives that precede the nouns they modify.

2. Adverbial

    a. Adverbial Clauses -- clauses of reason (cause/purpose)--because, condition--if, and concession--although.

    b. Adverbial Phrases -- phrases of reason (cause/purpose)--condition and concession.

III. Conjoining and Connective Devices

A. Coordinate
(Since NAEP computerized the text for the essays, counts of both intra- and inter-T-unit uses of "and" and "or" were machine tabulated.)

B. Semantic (other logical relationships)

1. Time naming structure -- clauses or phrases that establish time.

2. Adversative and illative -- words, clauses, or phrases that establish time.

3. Other signposts -- words, clauses, or phrases that indicate an addition, a sequence, or a comparison.

SYNTAX (SENTENCE TYPES) AND MECHANICS
SCORING GUIDE OUTLINE
(Developed for the 1973-74 Writing Assessment)
"Stork" -- Narrative Exercise
"Describe" -- Descriptive Exercise

I. Sentence Level Syntax Categories

Description of Sentence Types

1. Minor sentence (correct fragment) -- A word group used in dialogue, for emphasis, or as an exclamation that is not an independent clause.

2. Simple -- A sentence that contains a subject and a verb. It may also have an object or a subject complement.

3. Simple with phrase -- A simple sentence that contains a prepositional, infinitive, gerund and/or participial phrase. Sentences containing appositives, nominative absolutes, and verbals were also scored in this category.

4. Compound -- A sentence containing two or more simple sentences joined by something other than a comma.

5. Compound with phrase -- A compound sentence containing at least one phrase in one of the independent clauses.

6. Complex (and compound-complex) -- A sentence containing at least one independent clause and one dependent clause.

7. Complex (and compound-complex) with phrase -- A sentence containing at least one independent clause, one dependent clause, and one phrase.

II. Sentence Level Mechanics Categories

A. Sentence Types with Punctuation Errors-(sentences that do not fall into any of the syntax categories).

1. Run-on Sentences

   a. Fused -- A sentence containing two or more independent clauses with no punctuation or conjunction separating them.

   b. On and on -- A sentence consisting of four or more independent clauses strung together with conjunctions.

   c. Comma splice -- A sentence containing two or more independent clauses separated by a comma instead of a semicolon or a coordinating conjunction.

2. Incorrect fragments -- A word group, other than an independent clause, written and punctuated as a sentence.

NOTE: The scoring of T-unit constituents made it possible for some of the preceding sentence types to be derived through data analysis for the "Stork" papers.

B. Faulty Sentence Construction (These scores are in addition to the sentence types.)

1. Agreement Error -- A sentence where at least one of the following is present: subject/verb do not agree, pronoun/antecedent do not agree, noun/modifier do not agree, subject/object pronoun misused, and/or verb tense shifts.

2. Awkward Sentences (The awkward categories are listed in order of category precedence, since only one score was given to a sentence.)

   a. Faulty parallelism -- A parallel construction that is semantically or structurally dysfunctional.

   b. Unclear pronoun reference -- A pronoun's antecedent is unclear.

   c. Illogical construction -- Faulty modification or a dangling modifier or a functionally misarranged or misproportioned sentence.

   d. Other dysfunctions -- A sentence containing an omitted or extra word and/or a split construction that definitely detracts from readability.

III. Punctuation Errors -- Every error of commission and error of omission is scored for commas, dashes, quotation marks, semicolons, apostrophes, and end marks. The most informal rules of usage are used with the writer receiving the benefit of any doubt.

IV. Word Level Mechanics Categories

A. Word Choice -- The writer needs a word that is different from the one written. This category also includes attempts at a verb, adjective, or adverb form that is nonexistent or unacceptable.

B. Spelling -- In addition to a misspelling, this category includes word division errors at the end of a line, two words written as one, one word written as two, superfluous plurals, and groups of distinguishable letters that do not make a legitimate word.

C. Capitalization -- A word is given a capitalization error score if the first word in a sentence is not capitalized, if a proper noun or adjective within a sentence is not capitalized, and if the pronoun "I" is not capitalized.

APPENDIX C

GROUP RESULTS, EXERCISES EVALUATED FOR PRIMARY TRAIT AND COHESION

The tables in Appendix C, present group *differences* from the national percentage, not the actual performance of the group. Thus, if the national percentages for a particular item is, for example, 71% and the group *difference* from the nation is 12%, the group percentage or performance level is 71 plus 12, or 83%. The advantage to presenting group data in terms of differences is that such tables enable one to see whether the relative position of a group, vis-a-vis the nation, is changing. As before, an asterisk next to a group difference signifies that the difference is statistically significant; an asterisk next to the percentage estimating the change for that group signifies that the change is statistically significant.

Table C-1. "Stork" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-2. "Stork" Exercise, Cohesion
Table C-3. "Grape Peeler" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-4. "Rec Center" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-5. "Electric Blanket" Exercise, Primary Trait

TABLE C–1. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Stork" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1969, 1974, 1979

	Year	Nonrateable	Inadequate	Some Storytelling	Storytelling	Full Storytelling	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Nation (%)	1969	1.0	1.8	32.7	56.5	8.0	97.2	64.5
	1974	1.5	2.7	36.4	51.5	7.8	95.8	59.4
	1979	0.9	1.1	23.1	64.7	10.2	98.0	74.8
	1969–79	-0.1	-0.7	-9.5*	8.1*	2.1	0.8	10.3*
Region								
Southeast	1969	0.3	0.3	12.1*	-11.2*	-1.5	-0.7	-12.7*
	1974	-0.7*	1.7	4.3	-5.0	-0.3	-1.0	-5.3
	1979	-0.1	-0.1	6.0*	-2.9	-2.7	0.3	-5.7
	1969–79	-0.6	-0.4	-6.1	8.2	-1.2	0.9	7.0
West	1969	0.9	-0.5	-10.4*	8.0	2.0	-0.4	10.0*
	1974	-0.2	-0.2	-0.9	2.1	-0.8	0.4	1.3
	1979	0.1	1.0	1.8	-2.7	-0.2	-1.2	-2.9
	1969–79	-0.8	1.5*	12.2*	-10.7*	-2.3	-0.8	-13.0*
Central	1969	-0.6*	1.0	3.9	-3.1	-1.2	-0.4	-4.3
	1974	-0.2	0.1	0.0	-0.9	1.0	0.1	0.1
	1979	-0.3	-0.3	-2.6	1.8	1.5	0.6	3.2
	1969–79	0.2	-1.2	-6.5*	4.9	2.7	1.0	7.6*
Northeast	1969	-0.5	-0.9*	-2.2	3.2	0.4	1.4*	3.6
	1974	0.8	-1.1	-2.1	2.5	-0.2	0.2	2.3
	1979	0.3	-0.7*	-5.1	4.1	1.4	0.4	5.5
	1969–79	0.8	0.2	-2.9	0.9	1.0	-1.0	1.9
Sex								
Male	1969	0.7	0.3	9.6*	-8.5*	-2.1*	-1.0*	-10.6*
	1974	0.3	0.9*	7.7*	-5.7*	-3.2*	-1.2*	-8.9*
	1979	0.5	0.4*	7.7*	-5.1*	-3.6*	-1.0*	-8.8*
	1969–79	0.0	0.1	-1.8	3.3	-1.5	0.0	1.8

TABLE C–1 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inade-quate 1	Some Story-telling 2	Story-telling 3	Full Story-telling 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Compe or Bet 3&4
Female	1969	-0.6	-0.3	-8.3*	7.4*	1.8*	0.9*	9.2
	1974	-0.3	-0.9*	-7.4*	5.4*	3.1*	1.1*	8.5
	1979	-0.5	-0.4*	-7.0*	4.7*	3.3*	0.9*	8.0
	1969–79	0.0	-0.1	1.3	-2.7	1.5	0.0	-1.3
Race								
White	1969	-0.3	-0.6*	-1.7*	2.1*	0.6*	1.0*	2.7
	1974	-0.2	-0.8*	-1.6*	1.5*	1.1*	1.0*	2.6
	1979	-0.1	-0.3	-1.9*	1.5*	0.8*	0.4	2.3
	1969–79	0.3	0.3	-0.2	-0.6	0.2	-0.6	-0.4
Black	1969	1.9	3.9*	19.1*	-18.4*	-6.4*	-5.8*	-24.8
	1974	0.3	5.3*	12.9*	-12.6*	-5.9*	-5.6*	-18.5
	1979	0.5	1.5*	13.8*	-11.4*	-4.5*	-2.1*	-15.9
	1969–79	-1.4	-2.3	-5.2	7.0	1.9	3.7	9.0
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1969	0.0	1.0	10.4*	-5.5	-5.9*	-1.0	-11.5
	1974	0.8	2.0*	11.8*	-10.0*	-4.6*	-2.8	-14.6
	1979	0.9	0.8	11.6*	-6.7	-6.7*	-1.7	-13.3
	1969–79	1.0	-0.2	1.2	-1.1	-0.8	-0.7	-1.9
Grad. high school	1969	-0.2	0.8	2.6	-2.5	-0.7	-0.6	-3.2
	1974	0.0	-0.1	0.9	0.2	-1.0	0.1	-0.8
	1979	-0.3	0.3	2.7	-0.8	-2.0	0.0	-2.7
	1969–79	-0.1	-0.4	0.0	1.8	-1.3	0.5	0.5
Post high school	1969	-0.3	-1.0*	-6.9*	4.9*	3.3*	1.3*	8.2
	1974	-0.6	-0.9*	-5.5*	4.1*	2.9*	1.4*	7.0
	1979	-0.1	-0.5*	-5.3*	3.0*	3.1*	0.8*	6.1
	1969–79	-0.1	0.6	1.6	-1.9	-0.2	-0.5	-2.1

TABLE C–1 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Some Storytelling 2	Storytelling 3	Full Storytelling 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1969	1.2	1.6	15.0*	-13.0*	-4.8*	-2.8	-17.8*
	1974	-0.4	0.0	6.7	-4.2	-2.0	0.5	-6.3
	1979	1.0	4.9*	5.7	-6.4	-5.2*	-5.9	-11.6*
	1969–79	-0.3	3.3	-9.2	6.6	-0.4	-3.0	6.2
Rural	1969	0.9	1.3	4.2	-5.3	-1.1	-2.2	-6.4
	1974	-0.5	0.7	2.1	-0.6	-1.8	-0.2	-2.4
	1979	-0.5	0.1	10.3	-3.0	-6.9*	0.4	-9.9
	1969–79	-1.4	-1.1	6.0	2.3	-5.8	2.6	-3.4
Advantaged urban	1969	0.0	-1.8*	-12.5*	11.9*	2.4	1.8	14.3*
	1974	1.3	-2.2*	-7.8*	-0.4	9.2*	0.9	8.7*
	1979	0.0	-0.7	-3.5	-1.2	5.4	0.7	4.2
	1969–79	0.0	1.1	9.1	-13.1*	2.9	-1.1	-10.1
Grade								
10	1969	0.5	2.7*	18.3*	-16.4*	-5.0*	-3.1*	-21.5*
	1974	2.3	4.6*	10.8*	-11.4*	-6.3*	-6.9*	-17.7*
	1979	0.7	0.6	15.9*	-8.2*	-9.0*	-1.3	-17.2*
	1969–79	0.2	-2.1	-2.4	8.2	-4.0*	1.8	4.2
11	1969	0.1	-0.7*	-2.3*	2.2*	0.7	0.7*	2.9*
	1974	-0.6	-0.6*	-0.8	1.4	0.6	1.2*	2.0*
	1979	-0.1	-0.1	-1.9*	1.7*	0.4	0.2	2.1*
	1969–79	-0.2	0.7*	0.3	-0.5	-0.2	-0.5	-0.8
12	1969	-0.8	0.3	-6.1*	4.6	1.9	0.4	6.5*
	1974	0.7	-1.9*	-9.6*	6.9	3.8	1.1	10.7*
	1979	-0.2	-1.1*	-4.5	-1.7	7.3*	1.2	5.7*
	1969–79	0.6	-1.4	1.7	-6.3	5.4	0.8	-0.9

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
∿Percentages may not total due to rounding error.
#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–2. Group Differences From National Percentag[illegible] "Stork" Exercise Cohesion Scores, 1969, 1974, 1979

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Attempts at Cohesion 2	Cohesion 3	Cohesion and Coherence 4	Competen or Better 3&4
Nation (%)	1969	1.0	0.8	17.8	67.2	13.2	80.4
	1974	1.5	0.6	19.7	64.1	14.1	78.2
	1979	0.9	0.6	12.1	70.9	15.5	86.4
	1969–79	-0.1	-0.2	-5.7*	3.7	2.3	6.0*
Region							
Southeast	1969	0.3	1.1	7.0*	-5.4	-3.0	-8.4*
	1974	-0.7*	0.3	2.1	-0.2	-1.4	-1.6
	1979	-0.1	0.0	2.7*	0.3	-2.8	-2.6
	1969–79	-0.6	-1.1	-4.3	5.7	0.2	5.9
West	1969	0.9	-0.1	-2.2	-2.1	3.5	1.4
	1974	-0.2	0.0	-2.1	5.7*	-3.3	2.3
	1979	0.1	0.4	0.0	2.2	-2.8	-0.6
	1969–79	-0.8	0.5	2.3	4.3	-6.3*	-2.0
Central	1969	-0.6*	0.1	-0.9	3.3	-1.8	1.4
	1974	-0.2	-0.5*	0.5	-2.7	2.8*	0.2
	1979	-0.3	0.1	0.2	-0.8	0.9	0.1
	1969–79	0.2	0.0	1.2	-4.1	2.7	1.4
Northeast	1969	-0.5	-0.7*	-1.1	1.7	0.6	2.4
	1974	0.8	0.3	-0.1	-1.8	0.7	-1.1
	1979	0.3	-0.5*	-3.0*	-1.8	4.9*	3.1
	1969–79	0.8	0.3	-1.8	-3.5	4.3	0.7
Sex							
Male	1969	0.7*	0.3	4.0*	-1.7	-3.3*	-5.0*
	1974	0.3	0.0	4.8*	-1.1	-4.0*	-5.1*
	1979	0.5*	0.4*	4.1*	-0.2	-5.0*	-5.1*
	1969–79	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.5	-1.7	-0.1

TABLE C–2 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Attempts at Cohesion 2	Cohesion 3	Cohesion and Coherence 4	Compete or Bette 3&4
Female	1969	-0.6*	-0.2	-3.5*	1.5	2.9*	4.4*
	1974	-0.3	0.0	-4.6*	1.1	3.8*	4.9*
	1979	-0.5*	-0.4*	-3.7*	0.1	4.5*	4.7*
	1969–79	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	-1.3	1.7	0.3
Race							
White	1969	-0.3*	-0.4*	-1.1*	0.8	1.0*	1.8*
	1974	-0.2	-0.1	-2.2*	1.0	1.5*	2.5*
	1979	-0.1	-0.3*	-1.8*	0.5	1.6*	2.2*
	1969–79	0.3	0.1	-0.7	-0.3	0.6	0.4
Black	1969	1.9	2.1	10.5*	-5.0	-9.6*	-14.6*
	1974	0.3	0.9	15.6*	-8.6*	-8.2*	-16.8*
	1979	0.5	1.7*	11.8*	-5.1	-8.9*	-14.0*
	1969–79	-1.4	-0.5	1.2	-0.1	0.7	0.6
Parental education							
Not grad. high school	1969	0.0	0.8	4.9*	2.0	-7.7*	-5.7*
	1974	0.8	0.6	8.7*	-2.9	-7.1*	-10.1*
	1979	0.9	0.1	5.2*	3.1	-9.4*	-6.3*
	1969–79	1.0	-0.7	0.3	1.1	-1.7	-0.6
Grad. high school	1969	-0.2	0.3	2.2	-1.1	-1.2	-2.4
	1974	0.0	0.2	2.2	-1.4	-0.9	-2.3
	1979	-0.3	0.3	1.4	1.8	-3.2*	-1.4
	1969–79	-0.1	0.0	-0.8	2.9	-2.0	1.0
Post high school	1969	-0.3*	-0.6*	-4.0*	0.1	4.8*	4.9*
	1974	-0.6*	-0.4*	-5.2*	2.0	4.2*	6.1*
	1979	-0.3	-0.3*	-2.4*	-1.7	4.8*	3.1*
	1969–79	-0.1	0.3	1.5	-1.8	0.1	-1.8

TABLE C–2 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Attempts at Cohesion 2	Cohesion 3	Cohesion and Coherence 4	Competent or Better 3&4
Type of community#							
Disadvantaged urban	1969	1.2	0.6	7.0*	-2.2	-6.7*	-8.9*
	1974	-0.4	-0.1	7.8	-9.0*	1.8	-7.2
	1979	1.0	2.3	10.3*	-3.1	-10.5*	-13.6*
	1969–79	-0.3	1.7	3.3	-0.9	-3.8	-4.7
Rural	1969	0.9	0.6	-1.8	2.5	-2.2	0.2
	1974	-0.5	-0.6*	-4.1	7.1*	-1.9	5.1
	1979	-0.5	0.2	7.2*	3.4	-10.4*	-7.0*
	1969–79	-1.4	-0.4	9.0	0.9	-8.1	-7.2
Advantaged urban	1969	0.0	-0.8*	-4.1	3.3	1.5	4.8
	1974	1.3	-0.6*	-6.7*	-5.1	11.1*	6.0
	1979	0.0	0.6	-2.5*	-4.0	6.0	2.0
	1969–79	0.0	1.4	1.6	-7.4	4.5	-2.9
Grade							
10	1969	0.5	2.1*	6.9*	-0.2	-9.1*	-9.4*
	1974	2.3	0.6	11.7*	-3.8	-10.8*	-14.6*
	1979	0.7	1.2	5.5	5.1	-12.4*	-7.3*
	1969–79	0.2	-0.9	-1.4	5.3	-3.3	2.0
11	1969	0.1	-0.4*	-1.6*	1.1	0.8	1.9*
	1974	-0.6	-0.1	-1.1	1.1	0.7	1.8*
	1979	-0.1	-0.2	-0.7	0.3	0.7	1.1*
	1969–79	-0.2	0.2	0.9	-0.8	-0.1	-0.9
12	1969	-0.8*	-0.4	-0.3	-3.6	5.0*	1.4
	1974	0.7	-0.2	-7.1*	-2.0	8.6*	6.5*
	1979	-0.2	-0.6*	-1.4	-7.3	9.5*	2.2
	1969–79	0.6	-0.2	-1.2	-3.7	4.5	0.8

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

∿ Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–3. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Grape Peeler" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1974, 1979

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Serious 1	Ambiguous 2	Some Humor 3	Humorous 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Nation (%)	1974	1.2	60.8	20.1	12.8	5.0	37.9	17.9
	1979	1.2	62.6	20.6	11.3	4.2	36.2	15.6
	1974–79	0.0	1.8	0.5	-1.5	-0.8	-1.8	-2.3
Region								
Southeast	1974	0.2	-2.6	1.6	0.4	[illegible].4	2.4	0.8
	1979	0.4	5.7*	-1.7	-3.1*	-1.3	-6.1*	-4.3*
	1974–79	0.2	8.3*	-3.3	-3.5	-1.7	-8.5*	-5.2*
West	1974	-1.0*	1.1	0.0	0.3	-0.3	0.0	0.0
	1979	-0.7	-4.3	2.9	2.4	-0.2	5.1	2.1
	1974–79	0.3	-5.4	3.0	2.1	0.1	5.1	2.2
Central	1974	0.7	-5.5*	1.0	3.4	0.4	4.8*	3.8*
	1979	0.6	-3.5*	0.7	1.7	0.4	2.9	2.2*
	1974–79	-0.1	2.0	-0.3	-1.7	0.1	-1.9	-1.6
Northeast	1974	0.1	6.2*	-2.0	-3.8*	-0.3	-6.2*	-4.2*
	1979	-0.2	2.8	-2.3	-1.4	1.0	-2.6	-0.4
	1974–79	-0.2	-3.4	-0.2	2.4	1.4	3.6	3.8
Sex								
Male	1974	-0.1	-3.9*	2.6*	2.0*	-0.6	4.0*	1.4
	1979	0.6*	-1.1	0.4	1.0	-0.9*	0.5	0.1
	1974–79	0.7	2.8	-2.2	-1.0	-0.3	-3.5*	-1.3
Female	1974	0.1	3.8*	-2.6*	-2.0*	0.6	-3.9*	-1.3
	1979	-0.6	1.1	-0.4	-1.0	0.9*	-0.5	-0.1
	1974–79	-0.7	-2.7	2.1	1.0	0.3	3.4*	1.3
Race								
White	1974	-0.5*	-2.2*	0.9*	1.2*	0.6*	2.7*	1.8*
	1979	-0.3	-2.1*	1.0*	0.8*	0.6*	2.5*	1.5*
	1974–79	0.2	0.1	0.1	-0.4	0.0	-0.3	-0.4

TABLE C–3 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Serious 1	Ambiguous 2	Some Humor 3	Humorous 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Black	1974	3.5*	14.5*	-6.8*	-7.4*	-3.8*	-18.1*	-11.3*
	1979	2.8	11.9*	-6.4*	-5.0*	-3.4*	-14.7*	-8.3*
	1974–79	-0.6	-2.7	0.4	2.5	0.5	3.3	2.9
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1974	1.2	10.2*	-3.4	-4.2*	-3.9*	-11.5*	-8.1*
	1979	0.6	7.5*	-3.7	-2.0	-2.3*	-8.0*	-4.4*
	1974–79	-0.8	-2.7	-0.3	2.2	1.5	3.5	3.8
Grad. high school	1974	-0.5	3.2	1.6	-3.3*	-1.0	-2.7	-4.3*
	1979	0.0	3.8*	-0.5	-1.8	-1.6*	-3.9*	-3.4*
	1974–79	0.5	0.6	-2.0	1.5	-0.6	-1.1	0.9
Post high school	1974	-0.6*	-6.4*	1.1	3.8*	2.3*	7.1*	6.0*
	1979	-0.6	-4.6*	1.4	2.0*	1.8*	5.2*	3.8*
	1974–79	0.1	1.8	0.3	-1.8	-0.5	-1.9	-2.2
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1974	3.4	9.8*	-6.3*	-3.5	-3.3*	-13.2*	-6.9*
	1979	0.2	6.9	-4.1	-0.3	-2.6*	-7.1	-3.0
	1974–79	-3.3	-2.9	2.2	3.2	0.7	6.1	3.9
Rural	1974	-0.7*	-1.9	2.1	0.2	0.3	2.6	0.5
	1979	-0.5	0.0	1.6	1.6	-2.6*	0.6	-1.0
	1974–79	0.1	1.8	-0.5	1.3	-2.9	-2.0	-1.5
Advantaged urban	1974	-0.3*	-7.2	0.6	2.1	4.8*	7.5	6.9*
	1979	-0.7*	-0.3	-0.8	1.5	0.3	1.0	1.8
	1974–79	-0.4	6.9	-1.4	-0.6	-4.5*	-6.5	-5.1

TABLE C–3 – *Continued.*

Grade	Year	Nonrateable 0	Serious 1	Ambiguous 2	Some Humor 3	Humorous 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
10	1974	1.8	9.8*	-3.6	-6.1*	-1.9	-11.6*	-8.1*
	1979	0.7	3.1	2.3	-3.1	-2.9*	-3.8	-6.1*
	1974–79	-1.2	-6.7	5.9	3.0	-1.0	7.8	2.0
11	1974	-0.5	-1.0	-0.3	1.4*	0.3	1.5	1.8*
	1979	-0.2	0.2	-0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	1974–79	0.2	1.2	-0.1	-1.4*	0.1	-1.4	-1.4
12	1974	0.2	-6.8*	7.6*	-1.7	0.7	6.7	-0.9
	1979	-1.2*	-3.0	-0.9	4.1	1.1	4.3	5.2*
	1974–79	-1.4	3.8	-8.5*	5.8	0.3	-2.4	6.1

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

∿Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–4. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Rec Center" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1974, 1979

	Year	Nonrateable	Not Persuasive	Minimally Persuasive	Persuasive	Fully Persuasive	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
ation (%)	1974	2.7	19.3	56.6	20.4	1.0	78.0	21.4
	1979	2.1	25.2	57.5	14.5	0.6	72.7	15.2
	1974–79	-0.5	5.8*	0.9	-5.9*	-0.3	-5.3*	-6.2*
egion								
Southeast	1974	-1.2	8.0*	-4.5*	-2.2	-0.1	-6.8*	-2.3
	1979	1.5*	1.2	0.8	-3.5*	0.0	-2.7	-3.5*
	1974–79	2.6	-6.8*	5.3	-1.3	0.2	4.1	-1.1
West	1974	0.5	-4.6*	5.0	-0.1	-0.8*	4.2	-0.9
	1979	-1.0	-1.9	1.1	2.1	-0.3	2.9	1.9
	1974–79	-1.5	2.8	-4.0	2.2	0.5	-1.2	2.7
Central	1974	-0.7	-3.1*	3.4	0.0	0.3	3.7*	0.3
	1979	-0.7	3.9	-2.6	-0.7	0.2	-3.2	-0.6
	1974–79	-0.1	7.0*	-6.1*	-0.7	-0.1	-6.9*	-0.8
Northeast	1974	1.0	2.1	-5.3*	1.5	0.5	-3.2	2.1
	1979	0.6	-3.1	0.9	1.4	0.1	2.5	1.5
	1974–79	-0.5	-5.2	6.2	-0.1	-0.4	5.7	-0.6
ex								
Male	1974	1.1	4.7*	1.1	-6.2*	-0.7*	-5.8*	-6.9*
	1979	0.2	8.3*	-2.2	-5.9*	-0.3	-8.4*	-6.2*
	1974–79	-1.0	3.6*	-3.3	0.3	0.3	-2.6	0.7
Female	1974	-1.1	-4.7*	-1.1	6.2*	0.7*	5.8*	6.9*
	1979	-0.1	-6.8*	1.8	4.8*	0.3	6.9*	5.1*
	1974–79	1.0	-2.2	2.9	-1.3	-0.4	1.1	-1.7

TABLE C–4 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Not Persuasive 1	Minimally Persuasive 2	Persuasive 3	Fully Persuasive 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Race								
White	1974	-1.3	-2.0*	1.7*	1.5*	0.2*	3.4*	1.7*
	1979	-0.9*	-2.2*	1.7*	1.5*	0.0	3.2*	1.5*
	1974–79	0.4	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2
Black	1974	7.3	15.8*	-9.8*	-12.3*	-1.0*	-23.1*	-13.3*
	1979	6.6*	13.6*	-11.0*	-8.6*	-0.6*	-20.3*	-9.2*
	1974–79	-0.7	-2.2	-1.2	3.7	0.3	2.9	4.0
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1974	1.1	1.1	4.3	-6.5*	0.0	-2.2	-6.5*
	1979	2.5	8.1*	-5.0*	-5.4*	-0.2	-10.6*	-5.6*
	1974–79	1.4	7.0*	-9.3*	1.0	-0.2	-8.4*	0.8
Grad. high school	1974	0.6	3.4*	-0.9	-3.1*	0.0	-4.0*	-3.0
	1979	0.3	2.6*	1.2	-3.6*	-0.4*	-2.9*	-4.1*
	1974–79	-0.3	-0.8	2.1	-0.6	-0.5	1.1	-1.0
Post high school	1974	-1.4*	-3.6*	0.0	4.9*	0.0	5.0*	4.9*
	1979	-1.2*	-5.4*	1.6	4.5*	0.4*	6.5*	4.9*
	1974–79	0.2	1.8	1.6	-0.4	0.3	1.5	0.0
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1974	7.1	4.9	-6.3*	-5.7*	0.0	-12.0*	-5.7
	1979	3.3*	10.2	-8.0*	-5.7	0.1	-13.5	-5.6
	1974–79	-3.8	5.3	-1.7	0.1	0.1	-1.5	0.2
Rural	1974	0.5	-4.6	3.0	2.1	-1.0*	4.1	1.1
	1979	0.9	1.8	1.9	-3.9	-0.6*	-2.7	-4.6*
	1974–79	0.4	6.4	-1.1	-6.0	0.3	-6.7	-5.7
Advantaged urban	1974	-2.2*	-1.6	5.2	-0.5	-1.0*	3.7	-1.5
	1979	-2.1*	-3.9	-0.7	5.2*	1.7*	6.1*	6.8*
	1974–79	0.0	-2.3	-6.0	5.7	2.6*	2.3	8.3*

TABLE C–4 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	Not Persuasive	Minimally Persuasive	Persuasive	Fully Persuasive	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Grade								
10	1974	6.5	12.6*	-5.2	-13.0*	-1.0*	-19.1*	-14.0*
	1979	4.4*	18.1*	-10.6*	-11.4*	-0.5*	-22.5*	-11.9*
	1974–79	-2.0	5.5	-5.5	1.6	0.5	-3.4	2.1
11	1974	-1.5*	-2.2*	1.5	2.3*	-0.1	3.6*	2.1*
	1979	-1.0*	-2.7*	2.4*	1.2*	0.1	3.7*	1.3*
	1974–79	0.3	-0.5	1.0	-1.1	0.2	0.1	-0.9
12	1974	-0.9*	-3.7	0.9	1.3	2.4	4.6	3.7
	1979	-1.3*	-5.7*	1.0	6.0*	-0.1	6.9*	5.9*
	1974–79	-0.4	-1.9	0.1	4.7	-2.5	2.3	2.2

Statistically significant at the .05 level.

∿ *Percentages may not total due to rounding error.*

#*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.*

TABLE C–5. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Electric Blanket" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1974, 1979

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Marginal 2	Successful 3	Excellent 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
tion (%)	1974	1.2	31.3	21.0	43.9	2.6	67.5	46.5
	1979	1.5	33.3	18.4	44.8	1.9	65.1	46.7
	1974–79	0.4	2.0	-2.6*	0.9	-0.7	-2.4	0.2
gion								
outheast	1974	0.2	0.8	3.0	-2.8	-1.2*	-1.0	-4.0
	1979	1.0	5.7*	2.9	-9.2*	-0.4	-6.7*	-9.6*
	1974–79	0.8	4.9	-0.1	-6.4	0.8	-5.7	-5.6
/est	1974	0.5	1.6	3.2*	-3.9	-1.3	-2.0	-5.2*
	1979	-0.4	-1.9	-4.6*	7.5*	-0.6	2.3	6.9*
	1974–79	-0.8	-3.5	-7.8*	11.4*	0.7	4.3	12.1*
entral	1974	-0.7	-1.5	-1.4	2.0	1.5	2.1	3.5
	1979	-0.2	0.7	-1.1	1.0	-0.4	-0.5	0.6
	1974–79	0.3	2.2	0.3	-1.0	-1.8*	-2.6	-2.9
lortheast	1974	0.1	-0.4	-3.6*	3.4	0.4	0.2	3.9*
	1979	-0.1	-3.6	3.8*	-1.6	1.4*	3.7	-0.1
	1974–79	-0.4	-3.1	7.4*	-5.0	1.0	3.5	-4.0
x								
lale	1974	0.5	5.0*	-2.6*	-2.8*	-0.1	-5.5*	-2.9*
	1979	1.2*	9.2*	-2.7*	-6.8*	-0.8*	-10.3*	-7.6*
	1974–79	0.6	4.2*	-0.1	-4.0*	-0.7	-4.8*	-4.7*
emale	1974	-0.4	-4.6*	2.4*	2.6*	0.1	5.1*	2.7*
	1979	-0.9*	-7.6*	2.2*	5.6*	0.6*	8.5*	6.3*
	1974–79	-0.5	-2.9*	-0.2	3.0	0.6	3.4*	3.6*
ce								
/hite	1974	-0.4	-2.4*	-0.9	3.3*	0.3*	2.7*	3.7*
	1979	-0.5	-2.9*	-0.5	3.7*	0.2	3.4*	3.9*
	1974–79	-0.1	-0.5	0.4	0.4	-0.2	0.6	0.2

TABLE C–5 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inadequate 1	Marginal 2	Successful 3	Excellent 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competen or Better 3&4
Black	1974	1.8	16.4*	4.2	-20.3*	-2.1*	-18.2*	-22.4*
	1979	2.4	18.5*	1.8	-20.8*	-1.8*	-20.9*	-22.7*
	1974–79	0.6	2.1	-2.5	-0.5	0.3	-2.7	-0.2
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1974	0.2	11.1*	-2.8	-7.6*	-0.9	-11.3*	-8.5*
	1979	0.8	9.7*	0.2	-9.6*	-1.1*	-10.5*	-10.7*
	1974–79	0.5	-1.3	3.0	-2.0	-0.2	0.8	-2.2
Grad. high school	1974	-0.2	3.1	0.3	-2.2	-1.0*	-2.9	-3.2
	1979	0.0	5.9*	0.3	-4.9*	-1.3*	-5.9*	-6.2*
	1974–79	0.2	2.9	0.0	-2.7	-0.3	-3.0	-3.0
Post high school	1974	-0.6*	-7.6*	1.4	5.6*	1.2*	8.2*	6.8*
	1979	-0.5*	-8.1*	0.4	6.9*	1.2*	8.6*	8.1*
	1974–79	0.1	-0.5	-1.0	1.3	0.1	0.3	1.3
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1974	2.7	15.5*	-0.7	-17.8*	0.4	-18.1*	-17.4*
	1979	1.5	10.6*	2.5	-13.5*	-1.2	-12.1*	-14.7*
	1974–79	-1.1	-4.9	3.2	4.3	-1.6	6.0	2.8
Rural	1974	-0.8*	3.5	4.1	-7.9*	1.0	-2.7	-6.9
	1979	-0.5	1.3	1.7	-2.5	-0.1	-0.9	-2.7
	1974–79	0.4	-2.2	-2.4	5.4	-1.1	1.8	4.2
Advantaged urban	1974	-0.6*	-5.5	2.2	1.6	2.3	6.1	3.9
	1979	-0.5*	-10.3*	5.1*	5.1	0.6	10.8*	5.7
	1974–79	0.1	-4.8	2.9	3.5	-1.6	4.7	1.9
Grade								
10	1974	3.8*	23.0*	-9.5*	-14.7*	-2.6*	-26.8*	-17.3*
	1979	3.0*	23.8*	-8.9*	-16.4*	-1.5*	-26.8*	-17.9*
	1974–79	-0.8	0.8	0.6	-1.7	1.1	0.0	-0.5

TABLE C–5 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Inade-quate 1	Marginal 2	Suc-cessful 3	Excel-lent 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competen or Better 3&4
11	1974	-0.7*	-3.0*	1.3*	2.3*	0.1	3.7*	2.4*
	1979	-0.7*	-3.1*	0.5	3.2*	0.1	3.8*	3.3*
	1974–79	-0.1	0.0	-0.7	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.9
12	1974	-0.8*	-10.4*	4.3	4.6	2.2	11.1*	6.8*
	1979	0.3	-8.9*	5.9*	1.7	1.0	8.6*	2.7
	1974–79	1.1	1.4	1.6	-3.0	-1.2	-2.5	-4.1

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

∿ Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

APPENDIX D

ERROR FREQUENCIES FOR GOOD AND POOR PAPERS AND SELECTED GROUPS

The tables in this Appendix display error frequencies for papers defined as good or poor by their primary trait, holistic and cohesion scores (3 and 4 = good, 1 and 2 = poor). In addition, error frequencies appear for males, females, blacks and whites. Sample sizes were too small to permit analysis of error frequencies for other reporting groups. The column of figures under "average number" presents the average number of errors per paper. The column under "average percent" presents the average percentage of errors per paper. When the error is a sentence level error—for example, awkward or agreement—the percentage represents the average percentage of sentences per paper containing that error. When the error is a word level error (for example, spelling), the percentage represents average percentage of misspelled words per paper.

TABLE D-1. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Good and Poor Narrative and Descriptive Papers, Age 17, 1969, 1979†

Narrative ("Stork")

	1969				1979				Change 1969-79			
	Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2		Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2		Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Sentence fragments	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.4	0.2	1.7	0.1	1.3	0.1*	1.2*	0.0	-0.1
Run-on sentences	0.2	2.2	0.4	5.8	0.4	3.4	0.4	9.0	0.1*	1.2*	0.0	3.1
Awkward sentences	1.5	12.3	1.1	17.6	1.4	12.3	1.1	22.1	-0.2	0.1	0.0	4.5
Faulty parallelism	0.2	1.8	0.2	2.9	0.3	2.4	0.1	1.2	0.0	0.6	-0.1	-1.7*
Unclear pronoun reference	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.0	-0.2
Illogical constructions	0.2	2.1	0.2	4.7	0.2	1.4	0.1	1.5	-0.1*	-0.7*	-0.1*	-3.2*
Other dysfunctional constructions	1.0	7.7	0.7	9.6	0.9	8.1	0.9	19.1	-0.1	0.4	0.2	9.5*
Capitalization errors	0.5	---	0.7	---	0.7	---	0.6	---	0.2	---	-0.1	---
Misspelled words	2.8	1.6	2.6	2.6	3.5	2.1	2.8	3.3	0.7*	0.6*	0.2	0.7
Word-choice errors	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	1.9	0.2	3.1	0.2	1.8	0.2	3.8	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.7
Total punctuation errors	6.4	---	5.1	---	6.6	---	4.9	---	0.2	---	-0.2	---
Comma errors	4.0	---	2.3	---	4.1	---	2.2	---	0.1	---	-0.1	---
Endmark errors	0.4	2.8	0.4	5.9	0.5	4.0	0.4	8.0	0.1	1.1*	0.0	2.2
Number of respondents			594				722					

Descriptive ("Describe")

	1969				1979				Change 1969-79			
	Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2		Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2		Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Sentence fragments	0.3	2.2	0.4	6.2	0.3	1.9	0.4	5.7	0.0	-0.4	-0.1	-0.4
Run-on sentences	0.4	3.3	0.5	9.6	0.5	4.7	0.6	11.1	0.2	1.4	0.1	1.4
Awkward sentences	1.1	10.8	1.5	21.2	1.7	14.3	1.4	22.9	0.7*	3.5*	-0.1	1.8
Capitalization errors	0.2	---	0.4	---	0.7	---	0.8	---	0.4*	---	0.4*	---
Misspelled words	2.4	1.5	3.7	3.5	3.8	2.0	4.4	4.5	1.5*	0.6*	0.6	0.9*
Word-choice errors	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.2*	0.0	-0.3	-0.2
Sentences with agreement errors	0.4	3.4	0.7	10.1	0.7	5.2	0.7	10.8	0.3*	1.8*	0.0	0.7
Total punctuation errors	2.5	---	2.5	---	3.8	---	2.7	---	1.4*	---	0.2	---
Comma errors	2.2	---	2.0	---	3.2	---	1.9	---	1.0*	---	0.0	---
Endmark errors	0.3	2.6	0.3	6.2	0.4	3.3	0.3	7.2	0.2	0.7	0.0	1.0
Number of respondents			365				538					

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE D-2. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Narrative Papers for Good and Poor Levels of Cohesion, Age 17, 1969, 1979†

	1969				1979				Change 1969-79			
	Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2		Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2		Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
					Narrative ("Stork")							
Sentence fragments	0.1	0.6	0.1	1.9	0.2	1.6	0.1	1.9	0.1*	1.0*	0.0	0.0
Run-on sentences	0.3	3.1	0.2	5.0	0.4	4.1	0.4	10.0	0.1	1.0	0.1	5.0
Awkward sentences	1.4	12.9	1.2	19.4	1.3	13.2	1.1	25.6	-0.1	0.3	-0.0	6.2
Faulty parallelism	0.2	1.9	0.2	3.5	0.2	2.3	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.4	-0.1	-2.4*
Unclear pronoun reference	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.1	-0.0	-0.2	-0.0*	-0.3
Illogical constructions	0.2	2.6	0.3	4.8	0.1	1.3	0.1	2.0	-0.1*	-1.2*	-0.2*	-2.8*
Other dysfunctional constructions	0.9	7.8	0.7	10.8	0.9	9.2	1.0	22.5	-0.0	1.4	0.2	11.7*
Capitalization errors	0.6	---	0.4	---	0.7	---	0.5	---	0.1	---	0.1	---
Misspelled words	2.9	1.7	2.3	2.8	3.4	2.2	2.8	3.7	0.6	0.5*	0.6	0.9
Word-choice errors	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.6	1.0	1.3	-0.0	0.0	0.4	0.6*
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	2.0	0.2	3.5	0.2	1.8	0.3	6.1	-0.0	-0.3	0.1	2.6
Total punctuation errors	6.3	---	4.4	---	6.4	---	4.7	---	0.1	---	0.3	---
Comma errors	3.7	---	2.2	---	3.9	---	1.9	---	0.2	---	-0.3	---
Endmark errors	0.4	3.2	0.4	6.7	0.5	4.3	0.4	9.5	0.1	1.1*	0.1	2.8
Number of respondents	594				722							

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE D-3. Average Frequency and Average Changes in Frequency of Errors in Narrative and Descriptive Papers for Selected Groups, Age 17, 1969, 1974, 1979†

	1979		1969-79		1979		1969-79	
	Male	Female	Male Change	Female Change	White	Black	White Change	Black Change
				Narrative ("Stork")				
Avg. % sentence fragments	1.9	1.4	1.2*	0.5	1.4	2.1	0.7*	-0.2
Avg. % run-on sentences	6.5	3.3	2.5*	0.3	3.6	12.1	0.9	3.8
Avg. % awkward sentences	17.6	12.1	3.2	-1.7	12.6	25.8	0.4	-1.9
Avg. % faulty parallelism	2.4	1.9	0.6	-0.6	1.8	2.9	-0.1	-1.6
Avg. % unclear pronoun reference	0.4	0.4	-0.4	0.0	0.4	0.5	-0.1	-0.6
Avg. % illogical constructions	1.6	1.3	-2.0*	-1.3*	1.3	1.8	-1.0*	-6.3*
Avg. % other dysfunctional constructions	13.2	8.5	4.9*	0.2	9.2	20.5	1.7	6.5*
Avg. # capitalization errors	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.0
Avg. % misspelled words	3.0	1.9	0.6	0.4	2.3	3.2	0.5*	-0.2
Avg. % word-choice errors	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.5	0.0	0.0
Avg. % sentences with agreement errors	2.5	2.0	0.6	-0.6	1.5	6.2	-0.3	0.4
Avg. # total punctuation errors	6.6	5.8	0.2	0.2	6.2	6.9	0.3	-0.1
Avg. # comma errors	3.8	3.5	0.1	0.4	3.6	3.6	0.2	0.5
Avg. # endmark errors	5.2	4.7	1.2	0.9	4.4	8.0	1.3*	-2.7
			Descriptive ("Describe")					
Avg. % sentence fragments	4.4	3.9	-0.5	0.2				
Avg. % run-on sentences	9.4	7.5	2.5	1.2				
Avg. % awkward sentences	21.7	17.1	4.4	2.0				
Avg. # capitalization errors	0.9	0.6	0.5*	0.4*				
Avg. % misspelled words	4.0	3.0	0.9	0.9				
Avg. % word-choice errors	0.5	0.5	-0.1	-0.1				
Avg. % sentences with agreement errors	8.1	8.8	0.5	2.7				
Avg. # total punctuation errors	3.1	3.3	0.4	1.0				
Avg. # comma errors	2.3	2.6	0.1	0.6				
Avg. # endmark errors	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1				

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

APPENDIX E

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE AND GROUP RESPONSES TO BACKGROUND AND ATTITUDE QUESTIONS

Appendix E contains the Writing Background Questionnaire as it was administered to 17-year-olds. Questions 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 were not administered in 1974; however, the remaining questions were asked in both the 1974 and 1979 assessments.

Table E-1, which follows the questionnaire, shows the percentages of responses to each question for the nation as well as the differences between national percentages and group percentages.

Table E-2 displays the differences between national percentages and the percentages of responses given by those writing poor papers (rated 1 and 2) and good papers (rated 3 and 4) for the "Stork," "Grape Peeler," "Rec Center" and "Electric Blanket" exercises.

It should be noted that for both Tables E-1 and E-2, the "I haven't written any papers" responses (1% to 2%) have been combined with the "Never" responses. Also, summaries for encouragement of prewriting activities, teacher feedback and the writing process are based on both "Usually" and "Sometimes" responses. Therefore, for example on Table E-1, the national percentage of 66 shown after "Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both" indicates the percentage responding "Usually" or "Sometimes" to either or both questions 4 and 5. "Either notes/outlines" indicates the percentage (28.3) that responded "Usually" or "Sometimes" to either question 4 or question 5. The percentage responding "Usually" or "Sometimes" to both questions (37.7) is found on the next line.

Table E-3 shows the national percentages of responses to a variety of questions about attitudes toward writing. The questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire, "How I Feel About Writing," developed by Richard M. Bossone and Lynn Quitman Troyka, The City University of New York.

National Assessment Writing
Background Questionnaire, Age 17

1. How many reports and essays have you written during the last six weeks as part of any school assignment? ______________________________

2. In the general English, literature or grammar classes you have taken during the past two years, about what part of the class time was spent on instruction in how to write reports and essays?

   ○ None of the time

   ○ Little of the time

   ○ About one-third of the time

   ○ About one-half of the time

   ○ Most of the time

3. In addition to the general English, literature or grammar classes you have taken during the last two years, have you had or are you now taking any of the following courses concerned with how to write?

	Yes	No	I don't know.
A. Remedial writing course	○	○	○
B. Creative writing course	○	○	○
C. Other writing course (If other, please specify.) ______________________________	○	○	○

4. Are you encouraged to jot down ideas and make notes about the topic of your paper before you write it?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

5. Are you encouraged to make outlines of your papers before you write them?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

6. Do you write a paper more than once before you turn it in to your teachers?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

7. When your papers are returned, do they have written suggestions on how to improve your writing?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

8. When your papers are returned, do your teachers discuss them with you?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

9. After your papers are returned, do you work on the paper again to improve it?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

10. Do you enjoy working on writing assignments?

Usually	Sometimes	Never	I haven't written any papers.
○	○	○	○

TABLE E-1. Responses to Background Questions, National Percentages and Differences for Groups, Age 17, 1974, 1979

			Region								Sex			
	Nation		SE		W		C		NE		M		F	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?														
0	13.0	13.9	0.5	3.0	2.2	-1.3	0.0	0.6	-2.5*	-1.9	2.3*	2.4*	-2.2*	-2.2*
1	11.4	12.3	0.6	2.8*	0.3	-1.0	0.5	1.4	-1.3	-2.8*	0.5	-0.1	-0.5	0.1
2	16.3	16.8	0.9	1.9	-0.2	-0.7	-0.1	1.8	-0.4	-2.8*	0.6	-0.2	-0.6	0.2
3	14.7	14.0	1.2	-0.2	-0.6	0.1	-1.1	-0.4	0.9	0.4	-0.1	0.2	0.1	-0.1
4	11.2	11.1	-0.4	-0.8	0.0	0.1	-0.2	-0.2	0.5	0.8	-0.5	-0.9	0.5	0.8
5-10	25.7	22.5	-2.0	-5.2*	-1.7	1.3	0.0	-1.6	2.9	4.8*	-2.5*	-2.2*	2.5*	2.0*
More than 10	6.2	5.3	-0.7	-2.0*	-0.6	1.6	0.9	-1.0	0.1	1.0	-0.4	-0.2	0.4	0.2
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?														
None	5.0	3.7	-0.4	0.7	0.0	-1.1*	-0.3	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.6	-0.1	-0.5
Little	41.6	33.7	-3.3	0.6	-2.8	-4.0*	0.7	-0.1	4.1*	3.8*	1.8	1.4	-1.8	-1.3
1/3	33.6	37.1	1.4	0.0	0.4	-0.1	0.7	0.5	-2.1	-0.5	-0.5	-0.2	0.5	0.1
1/2	13.8	17.4	1.1	-0.4	1.3	3.5*	-0.3	0.0	-1.5	-3.3*	-1.4*	-1.5*	1.3*	1.4*
Most	5.8	6.9	1.3	0.0	1.1	1.7*	-0.7	-0.2	-1.1	-1.7*	-0.1	-0.5	0.1	0.4
3. A. Remedial writing course?														
Yes	6.3	8.2	-1.0	0.1	2.2*	0.9	-0.5	-0.4	-0.8	-0.6	0.1	0.5	-0.1	-0.4
B. Creative writing course?														
Yes	20.5	24.6	-0.7	1.2	2.0	2.0	-1.0	-1.3	0.0	-1.8	-1.8*	-1.7*	1.7*	1.6*
C. Other additional writing course?														
Yes	14.9	16.6	-1.0	-4.5*	1.9	3.4	1.4	1.2	-2.5	-0.9	-2.0*	-2.8*	2.0*	2.6*
Total having taken additional writing course (other than remedial)														
Yes	26.1	24.0	-1.4	-0.6	1.8	1.8	0.4	-0.6	-1.0	-0.7	-2.3*	-1.9*	2.2*	1.8*
4. Encouraged jot ideas and make notes before write?														
Usually	--	54.4	--	-1.0	--	1.0	--	0.0	--	-0.2	--	-6.6*	--	6.0*
Sometimes	--	35.1	--	1.2	--	0.2	--	-0.2	--	-1.0	--	3.0*	--	-2.7*
Never	--	7.7	--	-0.4	--	-0.7	--	0.7	--	0.3	--	2.8*	--	-2.6*
5. Encouraged make outlines before write?														
Usually	--	49.4	--	-2.4	--	3.4*	--	-0.8	--	-0.5	--	-4.2*	--	3.9*
Sometimes	--	35.5	--	1.1	--	-0.7	--	-0.2	--	-0.1	--	0.5	--	-0.5
Never	--	11.2	--	0.3	--	-1.9	--	1.5	--	0.1	--	2.7*	--	-2.5*
Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both	--	66.0	--	-1.8	--	1.8	--	0.6	--	-0.9	--	-5.5*	--	5.1*
Neither notes/outlines	--	31.2	--	1.5	--	-1.4	--	-0.1	--	0.1	--	4.8*	--	-4.4*
Either notes/outlines	--	28.3	--	-0.2	--	-0.8	--	2.0	--	-1.1	--	-0.3	--	0.2
Both notes/outlines	--	37.7	--	-1.6	--	2.6	--	-1.4	--	0.2	--	-5.3*	--	4.9*

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued*

	Parental Education						Type of Community					
	NGH		GHS		PHS		DU		R		AU	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part of any school assignment?												
0	3.1*	7.0*	1.1	2.6*	-3.0*	-4.2*	5.3*	2.6	-0.3	1.8	-2.1	-6.9*
1	0.9	1.5	1.9*	1.6	-1.7*	-1.2*	-0.7	-1.6	1.8	4.6	-2.0	-1.7
2	2.4	1.0	0.7	0.8	-1.1	-0.5	-0.5	-0.1	0.6	1.4	-1.5	-1.7
3	-0.1	-1.6	0.0	-0.7	0.2	1.0	-0.9	-1.1	-0.8	0.4	-0.9	2.2
4	-0.1	-2.0	-0.6	-0.9	0.6	1.3*	0.1	-0.8	-0.8	-1.9	-0.1	1.1
5-10	-5.3*	-6.2*	-2.5*	-3.2*	4.4*	4.0*	-3.0	-2.6	-2.2	-4.8	5.2	7.7*
More than 10	-1.5	-1.7*	-0.6	-0.6	1.1*	0.8*	-0.9	0.4	1.3	-1.6	1.6	0.7
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?												
None	0.4	2.0*	0.2	0.4	-0.6	-1.1*	1.0	0.4	-0.8	1.1	-0.8	-2.2*
Little	-3.0	-0.2	0.9	-0.4	0.8	0.4	-5.7*	-2.1	1.3	-0.3	-1.2	-2.4
1/3	-0.9	-3.9	-0.1	0.2	0.9	1.4	-2.7	-3.9	0.3	2.1	1.7	2.6
1/2	1.9	1.0	-0.3	0.4	-0.4	-0.5	2.7	2.8	-0.2	-1.5	1.2	2.7
Most	1.7	1.5	-0.6	-0.7	-0.5	-0.3	4.4*	2.4	-0.6	-0.5	-1.1	-0.1
3. A. Remedial writing course?												
Yes	-0.3	0.7	-0.2	-0.2	0.2	-0.2	0.6	0.8	-0.2	-1.6	0.4	1.0
B. Creative writing course?												
Yes	-4.2*	-2.4	-2.1*	-2.5*	3.2*	2.3*	-2.1	1.1	-0.7	-5.3	1.6	1.0
C. Other additional writing course?												
Yes	-5.5*	-5.8*	-2.4*	-2.6*	4.1*	3.3*	-2.3	-1.8	-1.8	-7.1*	6.1*	4.6
Total having taken additional writing course (other than remedial)												
Yes	-5.5*	-2.6	-2.1	-1.7	3.9*	1.9*	-2.9	2.2	-2.0	-4.4	5.3	2.0
4. Encouraged jot ideas and make notes before write?												
Usually	--	-11.6*	--	-3.6*	--	6.1*	--	-7.4*	--	-4.2	--	12.6*
Sometimes	--	7.7*	--	2.7*	--	-3.8*	--	4.7	--	4.1	--	-8.1*
Never	--	2.8*	--	1.0	--	-1.9*	--	0.8	--	0.9	--	-2.9*
5. Encouraged make outlines before write?												
Usually	--	-11.2*	-	-3.5*	--	5.8*	--	-6.8*	--	-3.3	--	11.6*
Sometimes	--	4.3*	--	1.7	--	-2.0*	--	2.1	--	2.2	--	-4.7
Never	--	4.9*	--	1.7*	--	-3.0*	--	2.3	-	1.2	--	-5.0*
Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both	--	-11.4*	--	-2.9*	--	5.7*	--	-7.7*	--	-3.5	--	11.7*
Neither notes/outlines	--	10.4*	--	3.0*	--	-5.3*	--	6.8*	--	4.1	--	-10.3*
Either notes/outlines	--	0.0	--	1.2	--	-0.6	--	-1.2	--	0.5	--	-0.7
Both notes/outlines	--	-11.4*	--	-4.2*	--	6.3*	--	-6.5*	--	-4.0	--	12.4*

Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued*

	Race				Grade					
	W		B		10		11		12	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?										
0	-0.5	-0.3	2.3	2.0	7.4*	7.8*	-2.0*	-1.7*	1.7	0.0
1	0.2	0.4	-1.1	-1.9	1.1	1.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.7	-0.5
2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	-8.6	0.2	0.6	-1.3	-2.6
3	0.1	0.3	-0.4	-1.5	-1.6	-3.2*	0.4	0.7*	-0.5	-0.1
4	-0.1	0.2	0.5	-1.0	-0.9	-1.4	0.3	0.3	-0.3	0.0
5-10	0.4	0.2	-2.6	-2.2	-5.8*	-6.7*	1.2*	0.9	1.5	3.4
More than 10	0.0	0.0	0.4	-0.7	-0.6	-1.6	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.9
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?										
None	0.0	-0.1	0.5	0.8	2.1	3.1*	-0.5	-0.5*	0.7	-0.6
Little	1.8*	1.2*	-11.5*	-6.8*	-5.3*	-1.1	0.7	0.2	1.8	0.3
1/3	0.6	0.8*	-4.4	-4.4*	-3.2	-4.8*	0.8	1.1*	-0.6	-0.5
1/2	-1.1*	-1.0*	7.2*	4.9*	3.9*	0.0	-0.5	-0.1	-1.3	0.6
Most	-1.2*	-0.9*	7.9*	5.5*	2.4	2.6*	-0.5	-0.6*	-0.7	0.2
3. A. Remedial writing course?										
Yes	-0.3	-0.8*	1.3	4.0*	0.6	2.2	-0.1	-0.5	-0.7	0.1
B. Creative writing course?										
Yes	0.1	-1.3*	-0.7	7.3*	-3.9	-1.3	0.2	-0.5	3.8	5.2*
C. Other additional writing course?										
Yes	0.7*	0.6	-4.6*	-5.4*	-8.3*	-8.8*	0.7	0.9*	6.5*	5.0*
Total having taken additional writing course (other than remedial)										
Yes	0.5	-0.8*	-3.5	3.9	-7.0*	-2.8	1.0*	-0.1	3.3	4.1
4. Encouraged jot ideas and make notes before write?										
Usually	--	1.4*	--	-6.6*	--	-15.2*	--	1.8*	--	7.8*
Sometimes	--	-1.0*	--	4.0	--	8.2*	--	-0.7	--	-5.2*
Never	--	0.0	--	-0.1	--	4.6*	--	-0.6*	--	-2.1
5. Encouraged make outlines before write?										
Usually	--	1.7*	--	-9.2*	--	-13.7*	--	1.5*	--	8.1*
Sometimes	--	-0.7	--	3.3	--	3.1	--	0.0	--	-3.4
Never	--	-0.3	--	1.5	--	6.6*	--	-0.8*	--	-3.4*
Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both	--	1.5*	--	-6.8*	--	-14.5*	--	1.8*	--	7.0*
Neither notes/outlines	--	-1.0*	--	4.2	--	12.3*	--	-1.4*	--	-6.5*
Either notes/outlines	--	-0.2	--	2.2	--	-0.2	--	0.3	--	-1.9
Both notes/outlines	--	1.7*	--	-9.0*	--	-14.4*	--	1.4*	--	8.9*

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued*

			Region								Sex			
	Nation		SE		W		C		NE		M		F	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979
6. Draft/rewrite before turn in?														
Usually	53.9	56.3	-1.7	-2.5	-0.4	2.0	1.0	0.9	0.5	-1.1	-9.8*	-9.4*	9.4*	8.3*
Sometimes	40.1	35.9	2.1	1.8	-0.1	-0.9	-0.6	-1.1	-0.7	0.7	6.7*	5.0*	-6.4*	-4.4*
Never	5.9	7.8	-0.3	0.7	0.5	-1.1	-0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	3.1*	4.4*	-2.9*	-3.9*
7. Teacher suggestions on paper?														
Usually	33.1	48.0	-3.6*	-4.0	1.3	1.3	-0.4	2.2	1.8	-0.4	3.1*	0.3	-3.0*	-0.3
Sometimes	56.5	44.2	0.4	1.6	-1.2	-0.6	0.8	-1.1	-0.1	0.5	-3.3*	-2.0*	3.2*	1.7*
Never	10.4	7.7	3.2*	2.4	-0.1	-0.7	-0.5	-1.1	-1.7	-0.1	0.1	1.7*	-0.1	-1.4*
8. Teacher discuss papers?														
Usually	--	27.0	--	5.2*	--	-2.9	--	-1.0	--	0.0	--	0.2	--	-0.1
Sometimes	--	57.1	--	-3.0	--	2.5	--	0.4	--	-0.7	--	-0.9	--	0.8
Never	--	15.8	--	-2.1	--	0.4	--	0.6	--	0.8	--	0.7	--	-0.6
Teacher feedback suggestions, discussions or both	--	57.9	--	0.1	--	-1.0	--	1.3	--	-0.3	--	0.4	--	-0.4
Neither suggest/discuss	--	42.1	--	-0.1	--	1.0	--	-1.3	--	0.3	--	-0.4	--	0.4
Either suggest/discuss	--	40.4	--	-1.1	--	-0.3	--	1.3	--	-0.1	--	0.5	--	-0.4
Both suggest/discuss	--	17.5	--	1.2	--	-0.8	--	0.0	--	-0.2	--	0.0	--	0.0
9. Improve returned papers?														
Usually	--	13.4	--	3.1	--	0.5	--	-1.9	--	-1.2	--	-1.0	--	0.9
Sometimes	--	46.2	--	1.5	--	2.2	--	0.3	--	-4.0*	--	-1.7	--	1.5
Never	--	40.3	--	-4.7	--	-2.7	--	1.5	--	5.2*	--	2.7*	--	-2.4*
10. Enjoy working on writing?														
Usually	--	20.6	--	-0.6	--	2.4	--	-0.6	--	-1.7	--	-5.8*	--	5.1*
Sometimes	--	55.3	--	0.2	--	1.3	--	-0.7	--	-0.8	--	-2.0*	--	1.7*
Never	--	24.1	--	0.4	--	-3.8*	--	1.3	--	2.5	--	7.8*	--	-6.8*
Summary process: prewrite, draft, feedback, improve														
None	--	10.4	--	1.0	--	-0.1	--	-0.1	--	-0.5	--	3.7*	--	-3.3*
At least 1	--	89.5	--	-1.0	--	0.1	--	0.1	--	0.5	--	-3.7*	--	3.3*
At least 2	--	67.0	--	-0.8	--	0.7	--	1.0	--	-1.2	--	-6.3*	--	5.5*
At least 3	--	34.2	--	0.4	--	1.6	--	0.9	--	-2.9	--	-4.8*	--	4.2*
All 4	--	6.7	--	1.5	--	0.6	--	-1.1	--	-0.8	--	-0.7	--	0.7
Number of respondents	34,211	26,651												

Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued*

	Parental Education						Type of Community					
	NGH		GHS		PHS		DU		R		AU	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979
6. Draft/rewrite before turn in?												
Usually	-8.0*	-9.8*	-2.7*	-3.5*	5.9*	5.5*	-10.9*	-8.3*	-3.4	-3.3	7.7*	7.1*
Sometimes	6.6*	6.4*	2.1	2.4	-4.5*	-3.5*	8.3*	6.9*	2.8	1.8	6.8*	-4.1
Never	1.4	3.4*	0.6	1.2	-1.4*	-1.9*	2.6	1.4	0.5	1.5	-0.9	-3.0*
7. Teacher suggestions on paper?												
Usually	-5.7*	-11.1*	-1.5	-2.3	3.8*	4.7*	-6.1*	-9.9*	-2.1	-0.9	7.6*	8.8*
Sometimes	1.5	5.2*	0.6	1.6	-1.0	-2.4*	0.8	6.3*	0.1	-0.3	-4.5	-5.8*
Never	4.2*	5.9*	0.8	0.7	-2.7*	-2.3*	5.3*	3.5*	2.0	1.2	-3.1*	-3.0*
8. Teacher discuss papers?												
Usually	--	3.2	--	-0.7	--	-0.3	--	4.7	--	4.1	--	-1.3
Sometimes	--	-3.9	--	-0.1	--	1.1	--	-4.3	--	-2.8	--	3.5
Never	--	0.7	--	0.8	--	-0.7	--	-0.4	--	-1.3	--	-2.2
Teacher feedback suggestions, discussions or both	--	-6.1*	--	-1.5	--	2.8*	--	-4.3	--	2.1	--	5.8*
Neither suggest/discuss	--	6.1*	--	1.5	--	-2.8*	--	4.3	--	-2.1	--	-5.8*
Either suggest/discuss	--	-4.3	--	-0.1	--	1.3	--	-3.4	--	1.4	--	4.2
Both suggest/discuss	--	-1.8	--	-1.5	--	1.5*	--	-0.8	--	0.7	--	1.6
9. Improve returned papers?												
Usually	--	3.3	--	0.0	--	-0.8	--	2.5	--	2.3	--	0.9
Sometimes	--	1.1	--	-0.4	--	0.1	--	2.6	--	0.6	--	-0.2
Never	--	-4.4	--	0.4	--	0.7	--	-5.2	--	-2.8	--	-0.7
10. Enjoy working on writing?												
Usually	--	-0.9	--	-3.7*	--	2.4*	--	1.3	--	-2.1	--	0.6
Sometimes	--	-0.2	--	0.6	--	0.0	--	4.1	--	-2.0	--	1.8
Never	--	1.1	--	3.1*	--	-2.4*	--	-5.4	--	4.1	--	-2.4
Summary process: prewrite, draft, feedback, improve												
None	--	5.9*	--	1.5	--	-2.8*	--	2.7	--	1.1	--	-4.9*
At least 1	--	-5.9*	--	-1.5	--	2.8*	--	-2.7	--	-1.1	--	4.9*
At least 2	--	-10.5*	--	-3.0*	--	4.9*	--	-7.7*	--	-0.8	--	9.4*
At least 3	--	-7.4*	--	-3.0*	--	4.1*	--	-6.2*	--	-0.7	--	7.2*
All 4	--	-0.2	--	-0.5	--	0.4	--	0.2	--	0.2	--	2.5

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued*

	Race				Grade					
	W		B		10		11		12	
	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	1979	1974	19	1974	1979
6. Draft/rewrite before turn in?										
Usually	2.3*	2.0*	-14.3*	-13.1*	-14.4*	-12.8*	2.3*	1.8*	4.6	3.4
Sometimes	-1.9*	-1.7*	11.4*	10.4*	9.6*	7.3*	-1.4*	-1.1*	-4.1	-1.3
Never	-0.5*	-0.3	3.0*	2.7	4.8*	5.5*	-0.9*	-0.7*	-0.5	-2.0
7. Teacher suggestions on paper?										
Usually	1.5*	1.7*	-9.8*	-9.4*	-6.8*	-12.5*	1.1*	1.8*	2.1	2.0
Sometimes	0.2	-0.9*	-0.1	4.1	-1.5	4.8	0.5	-0.8	-1.1	-0.1
Never	-1.7*	-0.8*	9.9*	5.3*	8.3*	7.7*	-1.6*	-1.0*	-1.0	-1.9
8. Teacher discuss papers?										
Usually	--	-1.6*	--	15.5*	--	4.2	--	-0.8	--	0.1
Sometimes	--	0.8*	--	-8.9*	--	-4.9*	--	0.6	--	1.4
Never	--	0.8*	--	-6.6*	--	0.7	--	0.1	--	-1.4
Teacher feedback suggestions, discussions or both	--	0.0	--	3.6	--	-5.0	--	0.7	--	1.0
Neither suggest/discuss	--	0.0	--	-3.6	--	5.0	--	-0.7	--	-1.0
Either suggest/discuss	--	0.0	--	1.1	--	-1.5	--	0.3	--	-0.0
Both suggest/discuss	--	0.0	--	2.5	--	-3.4	--	0.3	--	1.1
	--		--		--		--		--	
9. Improve returned papers?										
Usually	--	-1.2*	--	8.2*	--	2.1	--	-0.3	--	-0.5
Sometimes	--	-1.0*	--	7.5*	--	4.7	--	-0.8	--	1.2
Never	--	2.2*	--	-16.1*	--	-6.8*	--	1.1*	--	-0.7
10. Enjoy working on writing?										
Usually	--	-0.4	--	3.0	--	-2.2	--	0.0	--	2.1
Sometimes	--	-0.9*	--	4.9	--	0.0	--	-0.2	--	1.7
Never	--	1.3*	--	-7.9*	--	2.2	--	0.2	--	-3.8
Summary process: prewrite, draft, feedback, improve										
None	--	-0.3	--	1.5	--	7.8*	--	-0.7	--	-3.3*
At least 1	--	0.3	--	-1.5	--	-7.8*	--	0.7	--	3.3*
At least 2	--	0.8*	--	-3.1	--	-11.3*	--	1.3*	--	3.8
At least 3	--	0.6	--	-2.7	--	-9.0*	--	0.8	--	3.4
All 4	--	-0.2	--	1.5	--	-1.1	--	0.1	--	0.4

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

TABLE E-2. Responses to Background Questions, Differences for Poor and Good Writers, Age 17, 1974, 1979

	Nation			"Stork" -- Primary Trait Narrative						"Stork" -- Cohesion Narrative					
	1974	1979	Change 1974-79	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79	Poor Papers Coh. 1&2 1974	Good Papers Coh. 3&4 1974	Poor Papers Coh. 1&2 1979	Good Papers Coh. 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?															
None	13.0	13.9	0.9	11.2*	-14.1*	8.4*	-9.0*	-2.8	5.0	9.2*	-12.0*	6.9*	-7.5*	-2.3	4.5
1	11.4	12.3	1.0	4.0	-4.1	5.5	-5.8	1.5	-1.8	1.9	-2.0	0.6	-1.0	-1.3	1.0
2-4	42.2	41.9	-0.3	-1.1	1.5	0.8	-0.4	1.9	-2.0	-1.0	1.4	0.2	0.1	1.2	-1.3
5-10	25.7	22.5	-3.2	-5.8*	6.5*	-8.0*	8.4*	-2.2	1.8	-3.7*	4.4*	-5.9*	6.2*	-2.2	1.9
More than 10	6.2	5.3	-0.9	-2.8	3.3	-4.1	3.4	-1.3	0.1	-0.1	0.6	2.0	-2.7	2.1	-3.3
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?															
None - little	46.6	37.3	9.3*	-0.8	0.4	0.7	-1.3	1.4	-1.7	0.2	-0.6	0.6	-1.3	0.4	-0.7
1/3	33.6	37.1	3.5*	-2.8	3.2	-1.6	2.0	1.2	-1.3	-3.4*	3.9*	-1.9*	2.3*	1.5	-1.6
1/2 - most	19.6	24.3	4.7*	6.6*	-6.1*	1.7	-1.1	-4.9	5.0	5.4*	-5.0*	1.6	-1.0	-3.8	3.9
3. A. Remedial writing course?															
Yes	6.3	8.2	1.9*	3.0	-2.6	4.9	-4.7	1.9	-2.1	3.7	-3.3	0.6	-0.4	-3.1	2.8
Not yes	93.7	91.8	-1.9	-0.3	0.5	-0.9	1.0	-0.6	0.5	-0.3	0.4	-0.9	1.0	-0.6	0.6
B&C. Additional writing course (other than remedial)															
Yes	26.1	24.0	-2.1	-4.0*	4.3*	-3.2*	3.7*	0.8	-0.7	-2.9	3.1*	-1.5	2.0	1.3	-1.2
Not yes	73.9	76.0	2.1	1.7*	-1.9*	1.4*	-1.6*	-0.3	0.2	1.2	-1.3	0.7	-0.9	-0.6	0.5
4&5. Encouraged prewrite: notes or outlines or both															
Yes		66.0				-0.9*	1.1*					-1.1*	1.2*		
Not yes		34.0				12.4*	-14.1*					14.1*	-15.8*		
6. Draft/rewrite before turn in?															
Usually	53.9	56.3	2.4	-6.3*	6.9*	-5.3*	5.8*	1.0	-1.0	-2.9*	3.5*	-3.7*	4.2*	-0.8	0.8
Sometimes	40.1	35.9	-4.2*	5.6*	-5.4*	1.7	-2.2	-3.9	3.2	2.9*	-2.7	0.8	-1.3	-2.1	1.3
Never	5.9	7.8	1.8*	14.8*	-20.4*	19.8*	-21.1*	5.0	-0.7	4.8	-10.4*	14.2*	-15.5*	9.4	-5.0
7. Teacher suggestions on paper?															
Usually	33.1	48.0	14.9*	-4.3*	5.1*	-3.4*	4.0*	0.9	-1.1	-4.2*	5.1*	-2.4*	.1*	1.8	-2.0
Sometimes	56.5	44.2	-12.2*	1.1	-1.2	-0.2	0.0	-1.4	1.2	0.8	-0.8	0.0	-0.2	-0.9	0.6
Never	10.4	7.7	-2.7*	6.9	-9.0*	9.7*	-13.9*	2.7	-4.9	8.6*	-10.7*	5.6	-9.9*	-3.0	0.8

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued*

	Nation			"Stork" -- Primary Trait Narrative						"Stork" -- Cohesion Narrative					
	1974	1979	Change 1974-79	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79	Poor Papers Coh. 1&2 1974	Good Papers Coh. 3&4 1974	Poor Papers Coh. 1&2 1979	Good Papers Coh. 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
8. Teacher discuss papers?															
Usually		27.0				1.6	-1.3					0.1	0.2		
Sometimes		57.1				-3.5*	3.3*					-2.3*	2.1*		
Never		15.8				3.9	-4.3					4.0*	-4.4*		
Teacher feedback -- at least suggest or discuss															
Yes		57.9				-1.3*	1.4*					-1.1*	1.1*		
Not yes		42.1				7.2*	-7.5*					5.7*	-6.0*		
9. Improve returned papers?															
Usually		13.4				1.3	-0.8					2.8	-2.3		
Sometimes		46.2				-1.8	2.2					-1.2	1.6		
Never		40.3				-0.8	-0.1					-1.1	0.2		
Number of respondents†	34,211	26,651		2,281		2,748				2,281		2,748			

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

†Percentages for the nation, presented to provide context, are based on the entire number of respondents participating in the 1974 and 1979 writing assessments. Percentages for exercises are based on the sample responding to each task.

~Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued*

	"Grape Peeler" Expression-Humorous						"Rec Center" Persuasion					
	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?												
None	1.9	-5.4*	2.4	-3.7*	0.5	1.7	7.1*	-10.5*	3.4	-8.6*	-3.6	1.9
1	1.9	-2.1	4.3*	-4.1*	2.4	-2.0	8.5*	-6.7*	2.0	0.1	-6.5	6.8*
2-4	0.2	0.1	1.2	-1.0	1.1	-1.1	-1.0	1.6	-0.6	1.6	0.4	0.0
5-10	-2.3	3.3*	-6.2*	6.8*	-3.9	3.5	-5.2*	5.9*	0.6	0.9	5.8*	-5.0*
More than 10	-1.1	2.3	-5.4	6.6	-4.3	4.3	-2.4	0.1	0.6	1.1	3.0	1.0
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?												
None - little	0.2	0.4	-0.8	1.0	-1.0	0.6	-0.3	0.1	-1.4	0.7	-1.1	0.6
1/3	-0.3	0.8	0.5	0.0	0.8	-0.8	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.1	-0.5	-0.5
1/2 - most	0.3	-1.9	1.2	-1.4	0.9	0.5	-1.7	-1.1	2.2	-1.6	3.9	-0.5
3. A. Remedial writing course?												
Yes	-1.5	2.8	-1.0	1.6	0.5	-1.1	5.7	-6.2	0.8	-1.9	-4.9	4.4
Not yes	0.3	-0.2	0.9	-0.4	0.6	-0.2	-1.0*	1.1*	-0.4	0.9	0.6	-0.2
B&C. Additional writing course (other than remedial)												
Yes	-3.2*	3.5*	-3.6*	3.6*	-0.5	0.2	-3.2*	5.0*	-1.7	1.5	1.5	-3.5
Not yes	1.3*	-1.5*	1.6*	-1.6*	0.3	-0.2	1.4	-2.1*	0.7	-0.6	-0.7	1.5
4&5. Encouraged prewrite: notes or outlines or both												
Yes			0.3	0.0					0.1	0.6*		
Not yes			-2.9	0.1					-0.8	-5.3		
6. Draft/rewrite before turn in?												
Usually	1.4	-0.6	-1.0	1.5*	-2.4*	2.1	-4.2*	5.6*	-2.6*	3.4*	1.6	-2.2
Sometimes	-1.0	0.5	0.8	-0.6	1.8	-1.1	3.4*	-4.9*	4.4*	-3.4*	1.0	1.5
Never	-4.9	2.8	0.4	-2.9	5.3	-5.7	11.7*	-12.9*	-0.2	-3.3	-11.9	9.6
7. Teacher suggestions on paper?												
Usually	-3.2*	3.7*	-2.5*	3.3*	0.6	-0.4	2.8	-1.3	-0.5	2.3*	-3.3	3.6*
Sometimes	1.7*	-1.5*	2.1*	-1.6	0.4	-0.1	-0.9	1.7	-0.6	0.2	0.3	-1.5
Never	1.0	-3.0	2.5	-4.7*	1.5	-1.7	-4.4	-5.1	2.8	-5.7*	7.2	-0.5

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued*

	"Grape Peeler" Expression-Humorous						"Rec Center" Persuasion					
	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
8. Teacher discuss papers?												
Usually			0.7	-0.2					1.9	-1.1		
Sometimes			-1.7*	2.3*					-0.7	1.6*		
Never			3.6*	-4.0*					-2.8	2.2		
Teacher feedback -- at least suggest or discuss												
Yes			-0.1	0.7*					-0.4	1.1*		
Not yes			0.9	-4.1*					1.6	-4.4*		
9. Improve returned papers?												
Usually			-2.7	3.8					-1.6	2.0		
Sometimes			0.1	0.8					0.0	0.7		
Never			-0.2	-0.1					-0.4	0.9		
Number of respondents†	2,283		2,765				2,308		2,784			

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

†Percentages for the nation, presented to provide context, are based on the entire number of respondents participating in the 1974 and 1979 writing assessments. Percentages for exercises are based on the sample responding to each task.

^Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued*

		"Electric Blanket" Explanation-Business Letter					
		Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
1.	Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?						
	None	6.1	-9.2*	14.8*	-16.3*	8.7*	-7.1
	1	1.6	-0.8	-0.5	1.4	-2.1	2.2
	2-4	-1.1	1.8	-0.8	1.3	0.4	-0.5
	5-10	-4.5*	5.0*	-5.2*	5.6*	-0.8	0.6
	More than 10	4.8	-4.5	-9.4*	10.0*	-14.2*	14.4*
2.	Time spent English class on writing instruction?						
	None - little	0.1	-0.7	3.3*	-3.1*	3.2	-2.4
	1/3	-3.5*	4.6*	-4.2*	4.4*	-0.7	-0.2
	1/2 - most	6.0*	-5.5*	0.0	0.0	-6.0	5.5
3.	A. Remedial writing course?						
	Yes	1.6	-1.3	2.8	-1.7	1.1	-0.4
	Not yes	0.2	0.2	-1.5	2.1*	-1.8	1.9*
	B&C. Additional writing course (other than remedial)						
	Yes	-4.4*	4.7*	-4.9*	6.2*	-0.5	1.4
	Not yes	1.9*	-2.1*	2.0*	-2.5*	0.0	-0.4
4&5.	Encouraged prewrite: notes or outlines or both						
	Yes			-1.4*	1.8*		
	Not yes			12.3*	-16.5*		
6.	Draft/rewrite before turn in?						
	Usually	-3.0*	3.8*	-3.7*	6.4*	-0.7	0.6
	Sometimes	3.2*	-3.9*	-0.2	0.4	-3.3	4.3
	Never	8.2	-7.1	13.3*	-14.3*	5.0	-7.3
7.	Teacher suggestions on paper?						
	Usually	-3.2*	4.0*	-5.9*	6.4*	-2.3	2.4
	Sometimes	-0.6	0.5	1.6	-1.3	2.2	-1.8
	Never	13.8*	-13.9*	9.8*	-11.0*	-4.0	2.9

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued*

	"Electric Blanket" Explanation-Business Letter					
	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1974	Good Papers PT 3&4 1974	Poor Papers PT 1&2 1979	Good Papers PT 3&4 1979	Poor Papers Change 1974-79	Good Papers Change 1974-79
8. Teacher discuss papers?						
Usually			-0.2	0.3		
Sometimes			-2.6	3.3*		
Never			-0.3	0.6		
Teacher feedback -- at least suggest or discuss						
Yes			-1.8*	2.4*		
Not yes			7.4*	-9.6*		
9. Improve returned papers?						
Usually			-6.0	6.1		
Sometimes			-2.4	3.1		
Never			1.5	-1.1		
Number of respondents†	2,276		2,781			

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

†Percentages for the nation, presented to provide context, are based on the entire number of respondents participating in the 1974 and 1979 writing assessments. Percentages for exercises are based on the sample responding to each task.

~Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE E-3. National Percentages of Responses to Attitude Questions About Writing, Age 17, 1979

On this and on the next page are statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by filling in the oval under the appropriate response. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A.	I like to write down my ideas.	20.8	37.7	21.7	16.7	2.9
		58.5			19.6	
B.	I am no good at writing.	6.1	16.1	27.2	35.7	14.8
		22.1			50.5	
C.	Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	3.6	8.7	14.7	43.2	29.5
		12.3			72.8	
D.	People seem to enjoy what I write.	5.8	22.6	51.9	15.1	4.3
		28.4			19.4	
E.	I expect to do poorly in composition classes before I take them.	4.4	16.5	22.8	40.6	15.7
		20.8			56.3	
F.	I look forward to writing down my ideas.	12.6	28.0	25.9	27.0	6.3
		40.6			33.3	

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
G.	I write for other reasons besides school.	18.8	48.3	7.2	22.6	2.9
		67.2			25.6	
H.	When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	2.3	9.1	27.4	46.8	14.1
		11.5			60.9	
I.	I enjoy writing.	17.0	35.7	21.7	20.0	5.2
		52.7			25.2	
J.	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	7.4	26.3	19.9	37.1	9.1
		33.7			46.2	
K.	I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	11.5	34.8	30.3	19.0	3.6
		46.3			22.6	
L.	I avoid writing.	4.9	15.9	12.7	43.0	22.5
		20.8			65.6	

Percentages may not add to 100% due to nonresponse. Also, percentages for strongly agree and agree or disagree and strongly disagree may not add to total agreement or disagreement due to rounding.

Percentage of Respondents Giving a Positive Response to 12 Attitude Questions

At least 1	95.7%	At least 7	50.8%
At least 2	89.8	At least 8	41.8
At least 3	81.4	At least 9	32.9
At least 4	74.4	At least 10	25.0
At least 5	67.4	At least 11	17.7
At least 6	59.6	All 12	9.5

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